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WHEN ALL THE WOODS ARE GREEN

S. WEIR MITCHELL.

Author's Edition

WHEN ALL THE WOODS ARE GREEN

A Novel

BY

S. WEIR MITCHELL, M.D.
LL.D. HARVARD AND EDINBURGH

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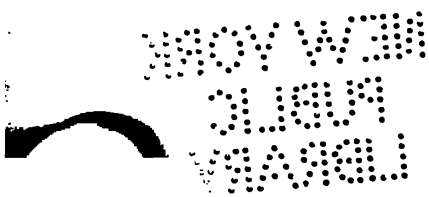

TO

JOHN L. CADWALADER

THE FRIEND OF MANY YEARS,—THE
COMPANION OF MANY SUMMERS

28X349

WHEN ALL THE WOODS ARE GREEN

WHEN ALL THE WOODS ARE GREEN

CHAPTER I

HE night of summer comes late in this north land. Although it was nearly nine o'clock, the shadows, long gathering in the valleys and the woods, had but just now overflowed onto the broad levels of the river. Above was hurry of low-lying clouds, through which swift star-gleams seemed to flit, like the momentary beacons of the rare fireflies along the shore. Far away the shriek of a departing train broke the general stillness and rang fainter and more faint in wild variety of tones among the farther hills.

On the bank of this wide Canadian river, a little above the margin, stood under the yet dripping trees a group of diverse people, but all of one household. Travel-weary and silent, for a time they looked down on the dimly lit stream, and heard, as they waited, the murmur and hum of its waters, or, with eyes as yet unused to the gloom, strove to see the group of men about the boats on the beach below them.

"This way, Margaret," said a man's cheerful voice;

"take care; there is my arm, dear. How delightful to see the old river!"

The night was so dark that Lyndsay hesitated as he stood on the verge.

"What is it?" said his wife.

"I do not quite like to go up to-night in this depth of darkness. Do you think it quite safe, Polycarp? Can you see?"

"Not very well," said the guide, "but soon break and have heap moon."

"I think we must risk it, my dear. You will go with me." Then he said a word of caution to the guides, and called to the boys, "Come, Dicky, and you, Jackums." They ran down the slope in haste and stood a little, made quiet for once in their noisy lives, but interested, alert, and peering through the darkness.

"Is that you, Tom and Ambrose? How are you all? and Pierre — have you kept me a big salmon?"

He shook hands with each of the guides, having a gay word of kindly remembrance for all in turn. Meanwhile the sister of the boys came down to the canoes, made silent, like the children, by the night, the pervasive stillness, and the novelty of the situation.

"Baggage gone up, Pierre?"

"Yes, Mr. Lyndsay; everything is right,—and the salmon thick as pine-needles. The small traps are all in. We might be getting away."

"Shall the women need their waterproofs, Tom?"— this to a huge form which loomed large as it moved among the other men, who were busy adjusting the small freight of hand baggage. The voice, when it

broke out in reply, was, even for a fellow of six feet two, of unproportioned loudness.

"They won't want none; it 's a-goin' to bust out clear."

Miss Anne Lyndsay, the maiden aunt of the children, came down the bank as Thunder Tom replied. Her steps, too feeble for health, were thoughtfully aided by Edward, the youngest boy. To her turned Rose, the niece, a woman of twenty years.

"Did you ever hear the like?"

She felt the queer impropriety of this terrible voice in the solemn stillness which, somehow, adequately suggested the tribute of the bated breath.

"Won't need no wraps, Miss Lyndsay. Rain 's done. There fell a power of water."

"What a voice, Aunt Anne!" said Rose. "It 's like the boom of the sea."

"He explodes,—he does n't speak; a conversational cannonade."

"Hush," said Mrs. Lyndsay, the mother; "he is quite sensitive about it. He was with us last year, and a very good man, too, as I know."

"Canoe is ready, sir."

"It is like a parting salute," said Rose.

"Well, my dear," whispered Miss Anne, "it will be a fine reminder for a certain person; all things have their uses."

"Thanks, Aunt Anne. A certain person has a not uncertain consciousness that she does n't need it. Folks complain that we women speak too loud. I am sure our men have lost their voices. As for the English women you admire so much, I could hardly un-

derstand them at all, with their timid, thin voices, and fat a's."

"Stuff!" said Miss Anne. "That is English."

"I prefer Shakspere's English," said Rose. "I advise them to read 'Love's Labor 's Lost.'"

"That is our old battle-field, Rose. But you would have to be consistent, and I do assure you, if you talked as Shakspere talked, you would make a sensation."

"Come, adjourn that skirmish," said Archibald Lyndsay, who had been rearranging the canoeloads.

Then the voice, to which others were as whispers, roared:

"Who 's for where, Mr. Lyndsay?"

"All right. Tom, your voice is really getting broken. Come, Margaret,—this way dear."

"It 's so," said Tom. "I kin speak bigger if I try,"—this to Miss Lyndsay, apologetically, as he aided her into the boat. "Fact is, Miss, I was twins, like them boys, and Bill he died. He had n't no voice to count on. It 's main useful when you 're drivin' logs."

"What a baby he must have been in a quiet family!" whispered Anne to Rose and Ned. "Imagine it!"

"I did n't understand what he said, Aunt Anne," remarked the boy.

"I do not think he quite understood himself. Perhaps he had a vague notion that he had to talk so as to represent the dead brother, 'who had n't no voice to count on.'"

"I like it," remarked Rose. "Yes, papa."

"This way," said Lyndsay; "here, Margaret, in my canoe."

"Could I have Ned with me, brother?" asked Miss Anne.

"Certainly. Here, in this canoe, not the birch. This one,— now, so, with your face up the river, and you, Ned,— yes, on the cushion on the bottom."

"How comfortable!" said Anne, as she leaned back on a board set at a slope against the seat.

"And now, Margaret,— you and I, together with Pierre and — Halloa there, Gemini! Oh, you are in the birch already. No nonsense, now! No larking! These birches turn over like tumbler-pigeons."

"You, dear," — to Rose,— "you are to go with Polycarp and Ambrose. By yourself, my child? Yes."

There was a special note of tenderness in his voice as he spoke.

"How is that, Rosy Posy?"

"Delightful! How well you know! And I did want to be alone,— just to-night,— for a little while."

"Yes." As he released her hand he kissed her. "Now, away with you." In a few moments the little fleet was off, and the paddles were splashing jets of white out of the deep blackness of the stream. By degrees the canoes fell apart. Despite the parental warning, the twins had secured paddles, and were more or less competently aiding their men, so that soon they were far ahead.

Lyndsay chatted with his guides of the salmon, and of his luggage and stores, sent up the day before. Aunt Anne and her favorite Ned were silent for a time; but the boy's glance roamed restlessly from sky

to stream, and up over the great dim hills. At last he said:

"Hark, Aunt Anne; how loud things sound at night!"

"Them 's the rapids," said Tom, in tones that made Miss Lyndsay start. "Them 's a mile away."

"I suppose, Ned, that when all one's other senses are more or less unused, the ear may hear more distinctly; at all events, what you say is true, I think. If I want to hear very plainly, I am apt to shut my eyes — good music always makes me do that."

"That 's so," said John. He considered himself quite free to have his share in the talk. "When I 'm callin' moose, I most allus shuts my eyes to listen to them trumpetin' back. Dory Maybrook was a-sayin' that same thing las' Toosday a week. We was a-settin' out by her wood-pile. An' she sat there a-thinkin'. An' says she, 'It 's cur'ous how you can hear things at night.' Jus' like you said. Hiram he was a-choppin'."

"Who is Dory Maybrook?" said Ned.

"Well, she 's Dory Maybrook; she 's Hiram's wife. Hiram 's her husband," and he laughed,— laughed as he talked, so that the noise of it boomed across the wide waters.

Again for a while they were silent, asking no more questions. The aunt was wondering what could have given big Tom his overpowering voice, and how it would affect one to live with such an organ. She turned it over in her mind in all its droller aspects, imagining Tom making love, or at his sonorous devotions, for to Anne Lyndsay there were few things in life remote from the possibility of humorous relation.

Twice the boy asked if she were comfortable, or warm enough, and, reassured, fell back into the possession of the deepening night and the black water, whence, suddenly, here and there, flashed something white through the blackness, like, as the lad thought, the snowy wings of the turning sea-gulls he had seen over the St. Lawrence at break of day.

In the other canoe, far behind and out of sight, Rose Lyndsay lay, propped against the baggage, in delicious contentment of mind and body. It was a vast and satisfying change from the completed civilizations of the world of Europe, where for a year she had wandered with Anne Lyndsay. Three weeks before the evening on which begins my tale, she was in London, and now she was greeted with a sudden sense of emancipation from the world of conventionalities. Neither father nor mother was exclusively represented in this happily fashioned womanhood. And thus it was that her inherited qualities so modified one another that people missed the resemblances, and said only that she was like none of her people.

Nevertheless, she had her father's taste and capacity for seeing accurately and enjoying the simple uses of observation, with also, in a measure, what he somewhat lacked — the aunt's unending joy in all humor; sharing with her the privilege of finding a smile or a laugh where others, who lack this magic, can only conjure sadness. She saw with mental directness, and, where her affections were not concerned, acted without the hesitations which perplex the inadequate thinker.

Her aunt, to whom she bore some resemblance in face, had learned much in a life of nearly constant

sickness, but never the power to restrain her fatal incisiveness of speech. She could hurt herself with it as well as annoy others, as she well knew. But in her niece, keenness of perception and large sense of the ridiculous were put to no critical uses. The simple kindliness of her mother was also hers.

At times in life permanent qualities of mind vary in the importance of the use we make of them. Rose was now in the day of questions. Everything interested her: an immense curiosity sharpened her naturally acute mental vision; an eloquently imaginative nature kept her supplied with endless queries. The hour of recognized limitations had not yet struck for her. Now she set the broad sails of a willing mood, and gave herself up to the influences of the time and place. Deep darkness was about her. The sky seemed to be low above her. The dusky hills appeared to be close at hand on each side. The water looked, as it rose to left and right, as though the sky, the waves, the hills were crowding in upon her, and she, sped by rhythmic paddles, was flitting through a lane of narrowing gloom.

The impression I describe, of being walled in at night by water, hill, and sky, is familiar to the more sensitive of those who are wise enough to find their holiday by wood and stream. The newness of the sensation charmed the girl. Then in turn came to her the noise of the greater rapids, as, after two hours, the river became more swift.

Twice she had spoken; but twice the dark guide had made clear to her that he needed all his wits about him, and once he had altogether failed to answer her or, perhaps, to hear at all. But now the

clouds began to break, and the night became clear, so that all objects were more easily discernible. "Is your name Polycarp?" she said, at last, turning as she sat to look back at the impassive figure in the stern.

"I 'm Polycarp," said the Indian.

"What is that I hear? Of course I hear the rapids, but — it is like voices and — and — laughter. Is it only the rapids? How strange! Could you — just stop paddling a moment?"

The paddles were silent, and she listened. The sounds came and went, mysteriously rising, falling, or changing, despite the absence of wind, as they drifted downward when the paddles no longer moved. Mr. Lyndsay's canoe overtook them. "What is it?" he called. "Anything wrong?"

"No, no! I wanted to hear the rapids. They seem like voices."

"Ask me about that to-morrow," said her father, "but push on now. We shall be late enough."

Again the paddles fell, and her canoe slid away into the ever-deepening night. Of a sudden her trance of thought was broken, and over the waters from the twins came snatches of song, bits of Scotch ballads, familiar in this household. At last she smiled and murmured, "The scamps!" They were caroling the song with which they had been fond of mocking her in her girlhood.

"There are seven fair flowers in yon green wood,
In a bush in the woods o' Lyndsaye;
There are seven braw flowers an' ae bonny bud,
Oh! the bonniest flower in Lyndsaye.
An' weel love I the bonny, bonny rose —
The bonny, bonny Rose-a-Lyndsaye;

An' I 'll big my bower o' the forest boughs,
An' I 'll dee in the green woods o' Lyndsaye.

"Her face is like the evenin' lake,
That the birk or the willow fringes,
Whose peace the wild wind canna break,
Or but its beauty changes.
An' she is aye my bonny, bonny rose,
She 's the bonny young Rose-a-Lyndsaye;
An' ae blink of her e'e wad be dearer to me
Than the wale o' the lands o' Lyndsaye."

The voices rang clear a moment, and then were lost, and heard anew, without seeming cause for the break. Then came a fresh snatch of song:

"Come o'er the stream, Charlie,
Braw Charlie, brave Charlie;
Come o'er the stream, Charlie,
And dine with McClain."

As she listened and caught the wilder notes of Burnieboozle, they fell into the orchestral oppositions of the rapids, and died to the ear amid the cry and crash and hoarse noises of the broken waters.

Rose saw the men rise and take their poles, and felt amidst the beautiful dim vision of white wave-crests how the frail canoe quivered as it was driven up the watery way.

Then they kept to the shore under the trees, the poles monotonously ringing, with ever around her, coming and going, that delicious odor of the spruce, richest after rain, which to smell in the winter, amid the roar of the city, brings to the wood-farer the homesickness of the distant forest. Her dreamy mood once broken was again disturbed by that rare speaker, the silent Polycarp.

"I smell camp."

"What!" she said.

"Yes — very good smell — when bacon fry — smell him long away — two mile."

"I smell it," she said. "How strange!"

"Smell fry long way — smell baccy not so far. Smell Mr. Lyndsay pipe little while back."

And now far ahead she saw lights, and started as the Indian smote the water with the flat of his paddle, making a loud sound, which came back in altered notes from the hills about them.

"Make 'em hear at camp."

Presently she was at the foot of a little cliff, where the twins were already noisily busy.

"Halloa, Rose! Can you see?"

"Yes, Jack."

"Is n't it jolly? Give me a hand."

"No, me."

"This beats Columbus," said the elder lad. "Take care, Spices" — this to the younger twin, who, by reason of many freckles, was known in the household, to his disgust, as the Cinnamon Bear, Cinnamon, Spices, or Bruin, as caprice dictated.

"I 'll punch your red head, Rufus," cried the lad. "You just wait, Ruby."

"Boys! boys!" said Rose. "Now each of you give me a hand. Don't begin with a quarrel."

"It is n't a quarrel; it 's a row," said Jack.

"A distinction not without a difference," laughed Rose. "Oh, here is everybody." And with jest and laughter they climbed the steps cut in the cliff, and gaily entered the cabin which was to be their home for some weeks.

There was a large, low-raftered room, covered with birch-bark of many tints. On each side were two chambers, for the elders. The boys, to their joy, were to sleep in tents on the bluff, near to where the tents of the guides were pitched, a little away from the cabin, and back of a roaring camp-fire. Behind the house a smaller cabin sufficed for a kitchen, and in the log-house, where also a fire blazed in ruddy welcome, not ungrateful after the coolness of the river, the supper-table was already set. As Rose got up from table, after the meal, she missed her mother, and, taking a shawl, went out onto the porch which surrounded the house on all sides.

For a moment, she saw only the upward flare of the northern lights, and then, presently, Mrs. Lyndsay, standing silent on the bluff, with a hand on Ned's shoulder, looking across the river. Rose quietly laid the shawl over her mother's shoulders, and caught her hand. Mrs. Lyndsay said, "Thank you, dear Rose, but I want to be alone a little. I shall come in very soon." They went without a word, meeting their father just within the door. "Mother sent us in," said Rose.

"I understand," and he also turned back. "It is Harry! It is about Harry."

"Yes, it is Harry," repeated Rose; for the year before Mrs. Lyndsay had left a little weakly fellow, her youngest, in the rude burial-ground of the small Methodist church, some miles away, up the stream. She had been alone with Mr. Lyndsay and the child, and it had been her first summer on the river. When, the next spring, she had proposed to take thither the whole family, her husband had gladly consented.

CHAPTER II

RS. LYNDSAY — comely, rosy, in the vigor of young middle-life — was the first to welcome the sun, as it came over the hills beyond the river. In the camps was stir of breakfast, and silent, inverted cones of smoke from the fires. Soon Rose, on the edge of the cliff, cried "Good morning!" and the mother saw the strong, well-built girl come toward her, and had pride in her vigor and sweetness. They kissed, and the mother went in, and Rose back to her maiden meditations.

She sat down on a camp-stool, and felt that for the first time she had leisure to think. She and her aunt had been met by her father when their steamer came, and amidst incessant questions they had been hurried off into the wilds of New Brunswick. A year away had made for her new possibilities of observation, and now, with surprised interest, she found herself in the center of a household which, assuredly, even to the more experienced, would have seemed peculiar. It was, in fact, more peculiar than odd. There was no eccentricity, but much positive character. This Rose Lyndsay saw as she had never seen it before. The growth of definitely marked natures in the boys struck

her, the fresh air of a kind of family freedom rare elsewhere; the audacity of the lads' comments, and their easy relations with the father, were things which now she saw anew with more thoughtfully observant eyes.

It were well to say, however, that it was a republic with sudden probabilities of dictatorship, and that a stranger coming within its circle rarely beheld much of the outspoken fashions and droll appearance of equality which, at times, seemed to disregard the deference ordinarily yielded to parental opinion. In fact, there was a comfortable sense of comradeship all around, which had its values, and with it an affection so strong that the wounds of all intellectual differences, and of the somewhat rare physical contests of the boys, were easily healed by its constancy, and by the father's power to make each see in all the rest their specifically valuable traits. Some things which in other households are looked upon as serious were in this little noticed,— while, as to certain lapses, punishment was apt to be severe enough.

By and by Ned came out and sat down by Rose. He was the most silent of them all.

"Well," said Rose, as he kissed her, "is n't it beautiful, Ned? Look at the low meadows down below the elms, and the cliffs opposite, and the wild water! Don't you love it?"

"I think I — I like it," he replied. "How black the water looks — how wilful it looks — that was what I wanted to say. I *think* I like it, Rose. Sometimes I don't like things other people like,— I mean grown-up people. I suppose that 's very stupid."

"No,—oh, no!" She was struck with the oddness of some aspects of his mind. "Was that what troubled you yesterday, when we were all looking at that great flare of red sunset light,—you would n't speak?"

"It was beautiful, but—you won't tell, Rose?—the Bear and Rufus would laugh at me,—it was terrible!"

She looked aside at him, curious and interested. "I think I understand, and I shall never, never laugh at you, Ned. You must tell me everything."

"Sometimes I can't," he said. "It is queer, but sometimes I don't want to." He was truthful to a fault, and was of no mind to make unconditional treaties.

"I understand that, too"; and then they fell into lighter chat of friends and cousins, until Mr. Lyndsay called "breakfast," from the cabin-door, and they went in.

The twins were scarcely more than wide-awake enough to settle down to serious work at bread and butter and porridge. The canned milk they pronounced abominable, but soon learned that Mrs. Maybrook's cows would furnish a fair supply of their essential diet. Miss Anne came in a little wearily, glad as she moved of the stay of a chair-back and the boys' help, for they all rose at once.

"Did you sleep well?" said Lyndsay.

"No; worse than usual."

"I thought by your smiling you would have had a good night, but your dear old face is a dreadful purveyor of fibs. Are you feeling badly to-day?"

"Sh—sh—!" she cried, "don't dose me with myself, Archy; as that delightful Mrs. Maybrook said to

Margaret, 'I do hate to be babied.' Is that your tenth corncake, Jack?"

"Ninth, aunty,—I have to eat for you and me. I 'm like Thunder Tom's voice."

"That 's the good of being twins,—you can eat for two!" cried Ned.

"It 's my seventh," said Dick, complacently. "I would n't be such a G. I. P. as Jack."

"Sudden death is what he will get," returned Dick.

"Your seventh," said Anne. "But how can one die better than facing fearful odds?" And then there was a little moment of laughter, and the gay chatter went on. At last Mr. Lyndsay said:

"When you are through, boys, with this astounding breakfast, we will talk of our plans. Your mother wants to go up the river. She shall have the two Gaspé men. Rose, you will go with me for a first lesson in salmon-fishing, and you three boys shall go with Polycarp after trout. Lunch at one; and remember, boys, no nonsense in the canoe, mind. This water is too cold and too swift to trifle with. You are a pretty bad lot, but I should not like to have to choose which I would part with. As Marcus Aurelius said, 'Girls make existence difficult, but boys make it impossible.'"

"Who? What?" cried Rose.

"That was because of Master Commodus," said Ned.

"I 'd like to have licked him," remarked Jack, whose remedial measures were always combative.

"He was not a nice boy, like me," said Dick with a grin.

"Like who? I hope he spoke Latin with decent correctness. Out with you!"

"I had almost forgotten about Marc. Aurelius, aunt," said Rose, aside. "I was really taken in for a moment."

It was a family fiction, and still a half belief, that Archibald Lyndsay would some day publish a great commentary on the famous emperor's philosophy; meanwhile it served a variety of humorous purposes.

"*I* shall provide myself with a book and sunshine," said Miss Anne, "and then with a good field-glass, I shall own the world,—mental and physical."

"But are the books unpacked?" said Rose.

"No, but I have all I want. I must go and see."

Rose set out a lounging-chair on the porch, put beside it a foot-stool and a rude little table, made by a guide, and following her aunt to her room, came back laughing with an arm-load of books. Archibald Lyndsay smiled.

"No wonder that man at St. Lambert's groaned over Anne's trunk."

"That delightful man!" cried Rose, "who checked baggage, switched the trains off and on, sold tickets, answered questions, and did the work of three and laughed for six. He told papa 'he guessed he was n't no Canadian. Not much! Had to go down to York State once a year to eat pumpkin-pie and get sot up—kind of.'"

"He was of the best type of our people," said Lyndsay. "Come, Rose; Anne appears to be reasonably supplied."

"I should think so, papa. But I must see,—wait a bit."

"Oh!" he exclaimed, picking the books up in turn, "'Massillon,' 'Feuchtersleben,' what a name! 'Dietetics of the Soul,' what a droll business! The Mystery of Pain, my poor Anne! 'History of the Council of Trent,' good gracious!"

At this moment his sister reappeared. "Are you supplied for the morning, Anne? Past risk of famine, eh!"

"Not too heavily," she said. "You know what Marcus Aurelius says about books. 'There is nothing as economical as a bad memory, because then there ariseth no need to buy many books.' That is my case."

"Then this is all," laughed Lyndsay, pointing with his pipe-stem to the table. "Hum! Well, well! Come, Rose."

"Yes, go!" cried Anne, seating herself, "and take with you Epictetus. 'If that which is of another's life perplex thy judgment, go a-fishing,—for there thou shall find more innocent uncertainties, and will capture the whale wisdom, if thou takest nothing else.' You may recall the passage. Carp might have been the fish. Eh, Archie?"

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried her brother, as they turned away. "Anne gets worse day by day, Rose. Come. Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, indeed!"

As they went down the steps to the bluff, Anne Lyndsay, her thin white hands in her lap, looked after them. Her face was rarely without a smile; but, as Rose said truly, "Aunt Anne wears her smiles with a difference." Just now her smile was delicately flavored with a look of satisfied affection. As she looked over river and sun-lit hills, a sharp twinge of pain crossed

her face, and her hands shut tight a moment, while the sweat of a brief but overpowering pang wrung from her lips an exclamation. Her life had been physically narrowing for years. As she became less and less able to go here and there, to do this or that, she more and more resolutely broadened the horizon of her mental activities, but, no matter what happened, she continued to smile at or with everything, herself included. Now she wiped her forehead, and fell to smiling again, looking sharply about her, for this woman immensely disliked to be seen in the rare moments when pain was too emphatic for absolute silence. "I wonder why I hate to be seen," she said aloud, being unusually given to soliloquizing; for, as she liked to explain, "I have more respect for my own opinion if I say it out. It is easier to disregard the unspoken. I like to think I have the good manners to listen to myself. It does so trouble Archie, and that girl, for a day when I break up. I wonder if that small Spartan had had the perpetual company of his fox, how long he would have gone on without squealing. I know he wriggled," she said, and so fell to laughing, after which she lay back in her chair, waved her handkerchief to Rose, and began to read.

While the Gaspé canoe went away up the stream, urged by skilful arms, Archibald Lyndsay and Rose talked merrily.

"I told those boys to keep their eyes open, and not to come back and tell me they had seen nothing in particular. As for Ned, he is sure to see certain things and not others. He is a dreamer,—oh, worse than ever, my dear,—it grows on him."

"But his dreams —"

"Yes, I know. There is always something in them. He seems to me, Rose, too absent-minded for this world's uses. At times he puzzles me. He is the duck in my henbrood."

"He is pure gold."

"Yes, but when he comes to be put into current coin,— really, I don't know. As to Rufus,— Dick, I mean, I hate nicknames, and this family has enough for a directory; you will have six a week,—as to Red-head —"

Rose laughed.

"I get no more respect in this household than —"

"Oh, was that a salmon?" A fish, some three feet long, leaped high in air, dripping silver in the sun, and fell with a mighty swash into the glowing waters.

"Yes; there 's another! As to Dick, he sees everything, and for questions — you are nothing to him. I wanted to talk to you about them, Rose."

"And Jack?"

"Oh, Jack! Jack will do. He hates books, but he also hates defeat,— a first-rate quality, Rose. He is one of the three people I have seen in my life who honestly enjoy peril. That comes from his Uncle Robert. My poor Robin used to laugh when he rode into the hottest fight!"

Rose, remembering how the major died at Antietam, was silent. Her father was also quiet for a few moments.

"That boy must always be fighting somebody. Just now, he and Ned have a standing difficulty about the

Roundheads and Jacobites. I believe it has cost two black eyes already."

"How funny! What do you do about it?"

"I? Nothing. Ned is like a cat for activity, small as he is, and as to an occasional black eye,—well, I don't ask too many questions."

"But does n't it distress mother?"

"Yes, yes, of course; but so long as they love one another, I find it wise to say little. By and by, dear, when you are married, and have a lot of boys of your own, you will understand the wisdom of knowing when not to see,— when not to ask questions."

This astounding improbability, of a sudden, struck Rose dumb. Then she said, abruptly, "Who is that away up the river?"

"Two young Boston men. Are they from the island camp, Tom?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom, in his great voice. "Mr. Ellett, and Mr.— I don't rightly mind me of the other man's name. Think it 's Caringtón."

"Rather a pretty name," said Rose,—"Carington."

"Not a New England name, I suspect. Probably Southern. How easily one tells where most of our family names belong,— the older ones, I mean. Oh, there is their camp. See how neat everything is about their tents. Above this point, Rose, there are a few clearings, and the graveyard lies back from the shore, where our Harry is buried. Poor little man! He was well out of it, Rose, well out of it. We rarely talk of him. Your mother dislikes it. For myself, I like better to speak of my dead—and they are many—in a

The casting business began again, with no better result, so that Rose, to whom it all looked easy enough, began to find it more pleasant to watch the shadows of the hills and the heavy clouds moving overhead. Mr. Lyndsay was now casting some fifty feet of line, and, as Rose turned, trying to analyze for her own use the succession of movements, she was struck with the grace and ease with which the line was recovered at the end of the cast,— sent apparently without effort directly behind the fisherman, and then without crack or snap impelled in a straight line to right or left at an angle from the boat, so that the casting-line and fly dropped or settled lightly on the water; the fly always maintaining its place at the end of the cast. Then she heard, "You riz him!" "We have tickled his fancy, Rose, or tempted his curiosity. Now we have a little game to play. Sometimes we wait a few minutes. I rarely do so unless the fish are scarce. Look sharp. Did you see him rise?"

"No."

"That fish lies in a line with yonder dead pine. In this quick water the fly buries itself, but as I follow it with the rod, you can guess its place. Most commonly a salmon remains in one spot, with his nose up-stream, and —"

"Oh!" cried Rose, as the fly reached the indicated spot and a swirl in the water and a broad back caught her eye. "Oh! oh!"

"It has all the charm of gambling," said Mr. Lyndsay, "without the badness."

"Will he rise again?"

"Perhaps. Ah, not this time"; and after a couple of casts, he said, "Put on a black dose."

"A what?"

"Our flies have all manner of queer names. This is a 'dark fly,' quite unlike the bright doctor. It may tempt him." And at the first cast, with the same length of line, the peaceful scene was turned into one of intense excitement.

"There!" cried Rose. "Oh!" for as the new fly reached the fated spot, there was a sudden flash of white a dozen yards away. The reel ran out a few feet, the rod was lifted and turned over to bring the winch to the right hand, and the pressure on the entire length of the bending rod. The angler sat down.

Tom meanwhile had called to the bowman as the fish struck, and the anchor was instantly drawn up. For this brief interval of time the great salmon stayed, pausing. "Thinking what 's wrong," said Lyndsay. The next instant the reel sang, and some two hundred feet of line ran out with incredible swiftness. Far away across the stream a great white thing leaped high out of the water, as Lyndsay dropped the tip of his rod to relax the tension of the line.

"How exciting it is!" cried Rose, as the fish leaped again. "I don't sympathize with the salmon at all; I am intent on murdering him."

"Fresh run and clean," said Tom,—"a beauty!"

The canoe, urged by deft paddles, moved across the river. The tension relaxing, Lindsay reeled up line. Then again there was a wild rush up river.

"Tom, quick! After him!"

The next moment the line came back, slack.

"Oh!" cried Rose, "he is gone!"

"No! no!" shouted Tom. "Reel! reel, sir!" and presently the long, loose line grew tight, for the sal-

mon had turned and made straight for the boat. Now, once more, he broke water, thirty feet away.

"Them long runs tires 'em," said Tom, "and the jumps tires 'em more. Showed his belly, sir."

Lyndsay now slowly lifted his rod-tip, throwing it back of him, and then lowering it as he recovered the line.

"Take care, sir!" cried Tom, for once more there was a fierce, short dash across, and again a leap. This time the fish came in slowly, but surely, and Tom took his gaff.

"Can you do it?"

"Yes, sir." The gaff was in, and the great, flapping fish in the boat, and Rose pretty well splashed with water as Tom cleverly lifted his prey on the gaff-hook.

"A twenty-pounder, Mr. Lyndsay, sure!"

"Well, Rose, how do you like it?"

"Oh, papa, it is splendid!

"Where are we going?" she added, as the canoe was run ashore.

"The men will put the fish under a bush, to be out of the sun; and now, what were you about to ask? I saw a question ready in your eyes."

"I wish, papa — I wish I did not think the fish had a dreadful time. I have to think of pleasure holding the rod and tragedy at the end of the line."

"Upon my word, Rose, you are emphatic. I can assure you, my dear, that you may safely keep your emotional statements for another occasion.

"Let me tell you something. Once when fishing on the Nipigon, I saw an odd-looking, very large trout. He rose every time I cast, and at last took the fly.

Now, why the salmon takes the fly, not Solomon could say, because he eats nothing while in the rivers; but trout are pigs for greediness. When I looked this hungry trout over, he was still bleeding from a fish-hawk's claws, and his intestines and liver were hanging in the water. Such pain, or injury if you like, as this, does in man utterly destroy appetite and cause inaction. The inference is plain enough: fish cannot be said to suffer what we call pain. I once took a striped bass which had been terribly torn by a gaff. On the whole, Rose, I conclude that, as we go down the scale of life, there is less and less of what we call pain, and at last, probably, only something nearer to discomfort or inconvenience."

"Is that so? Then we hold our higher place at the cost of suffering, which must increase as we go on rising through the ages to come?"

"Yes," said Lyndsay, looking aside with freshened curiosity at this young logician. "Yes, the rule must work both ways. But man alone has the power to limit, lessen, even annihilate pain. The amount of pain in the civilized world must have been vastly diminished within forty years, since we got ether and the like."

"And will not that in time lessen our power to endure? But then," she added quickly, "that might be of less moment if we are always increasingly able to diminish or stop pain."

Lyndsay smiled. This alert grasp of a subject was a novel acquisition. As he was adjusting a fly, and the boat was dropping to a new station, she said:

"I hate pain. I don't believe in its usefulness.

Not for Rose Lyndsay, at least. It only makes me cross."

"Yet you would hesitate to make a world without it?"

"Yes. One can see the difficulties."

"The more you think of them the more they multiply. It is, of course, commonplace to say pain is protective, and in a sense educative. That one may admit; and yet there will still be such a lot of torment which is natural that one does keep on wondering why."

"Do you remember, Pardy,"—this was her nursery name for her father,—"when Mr. Caramel preached about the uses of pain, and said the man who suffered was ignorantly rich: he had only to learn to use his wealth?"

"Oh, very well I remember. As we came out Anne said she would be glad to be generous with her overcompetence, and wanted to send Mr. Caramel a few of the crumbs to relieve his too comfortable poverty!"

"Yes, only one can't repeat her bits of grim fun, Pardy; and when she tells Dick a green-apple stomachache is only a joke which he don't understand, you must see her face and Dick's grimace.— Oh, see how that fish jumped!"

"North has a curious notion that pain, except for early protective education, is, in a measure, useless. He declares that long bouts of it make men bad."

"Not Aunt Anne, Pardy."

"Oh, a woman! That is different."

"Nor that splendid fellow, Dr. Hall, now —"

"Bother, Rose! Don't interrupt me. North says

he has seen certain hysterical women get well as to everything except loss of sense of pain. He knows of two who are ignorant, at present, of the feeling of pain. You cannot hurt them. One of them declares that she would on no account resume the normal state."

"I cannot imagine any one wanting to be so unnatural, and she must lose all warnings as to burns and knocks."

"No, she substitutes intelligent watchfulness for the sentinel pain."

"I shall never get rid of pain by having hysterics," said Rose, confidently. "I can't imagine that."

"Occasion may assist imagination. Take care!"

"There is a scornful masculine note in that remark, sir! Why do not men have hysterics?"

"Ask North; he will refer you to *Hamlet's* condition. Is n't it in Act I, Scene IV, where he gets what Jack calls 'rattled' about the ghost? North says he was hysterical. Dr. Shakspere knew his business. But I meant to add that North says there is one case on record of a man who, in all his life, never knew what pain was,— had no pain; could not be hurt in any way!"

"How strange!"

"Yes, but we are losing the shining hours. The busiest bee could not improve them here."

"No, indeed!"

"Oh, one word more, and then let us pitch the horrid thing overboard. I was so puzzled once — I still am — about this passage in my Aurelius."

"Real or fictitious, Pardy? You are not always above following Aunt Anne's wicked ways!"

"What are these wretched leaders made of?" said Rose.

"Silk. They drown the silkworm in vinegar, and then, cutting out the silk sac, take the two ends, and pull them apart. The silk, for a whole cocoon, is in a state of thick solution, and is thus pulled out into one of the many lengths which we tie to make a nine-foot leader."

"How curious!"

Meanwhile, another leader was well soaked and adjusted, and Rose began anew. But, although she cast better, no more salmon rose, and, tired out, she gave up the rod. Mr. Lyndsay had no better luck, and, as it was close to lunch-time, they ran ashore to pick up their salmon, which Tom laid in the canoe and covered with ferns. Soon again the little vessel was in the strong current.

"There is no hurry, Tom," said Lyndsay; and so the canoe, held straight by a guiding paddle, glided swiftly onward.

"It is perfect motion, Pardy,—at most, it has the ease and grace of flight."

"It makes one envy the fish."

"Ah, the dear things. I am so glad to be able to think it really does not hurt them."

"Hurt 'em?" said Tom. "They likes it, else why 'd they want it. They need n't 'less they 're a mind to."

CHAPTER III

S they floated quietly down the river, close to shore, under birch and beech and pine and silky tamarack, the delight of open air, the pleasantness of the shifting pictures, the delicate, changeful odors, even the charm of the motion, were keenly felt by Rose. She was falling under the subtle magic of this woodland life, and lazily accepting the unobservant, half-languid joy it brought. At last she said:

"Papa, does it take you long to — well, to get away from your work, so that you can fully enjoy all this?"

"Three or four days; not more. I like at once the feeling that I have nothing I must do. After awhile the habit of using the mind in some way reasserts its sway. At home I watch men. It is part of my stock in the business of the law. Here I readjust my mind, and it is nature I have learned to watch. I was not a born observer; I have made myself one. After a day or two on the water, I begin to notice the life of the woods; the birds, the insects. This grows on me day by day, and, I think, year by year. It is a very mild form of mental industry, but it suffices to fill the intervals of time when salmon will not rise."

"It is so pleasant to drift!"

"Yes; that is the charm of the life. Nobody elbows you here; no rude world jostles your moods. You may entertain the gentle melancholy of Penseroso or the entire idleness of Adam before the apple tempted him. You may be gay and noisy,—no one is shocked; and then, the noble freedom of a flannel shirt and knickerbockers! Why do we ever go back?"

"There is a queer indefiniteness about it all to me," said Rose. "I cannot get into any full—I mean interested—relation with the life and all there is in it. I don't say just what I mean."

"I see, Rose: from Rome to this is a long way,—'a far cry,' we say in Scotland. Let yourself go. Drift, as you said."

"Ah," said Rose,

> "'"T is pleasant drifting, drifting,
> Where the shores are shifting, shifting,
> And the Dream God has the tiller,
> And Fancy plies the oar.'

It is not always easy to drift, and I am not yet enough at ease to drift. I find, Pardy, that the changes at home are very great. I am getting slowly used to them. The boys seem new creatures. You are just the same. But mama! I am so sorry for her."

"That will come right, dear. The mother-wounds heal slowly. As for me, I own to no discontent about my boy's death. Most people hold foolish notions as to death. In my third chapter on Marcus Aurelius, I have given a history of opinion about death. It has

had strange variations. Really, we are very stupid as to the matter. The old heathen is fine about it: 'Thou hast embarked. Thou hast made the voyage. Thou art come to shore; leave the ship. There is no want of Gods even there.'"

"Yes, but—I did not embark," said Rose. "I was put on as freight. I—"

"How horribly exact you are for a summer day! I won't argue with you; you love it. How quiet it is! Not a leaf stirs. How completely peaceful! The drowsiness of noon."

"Yes, it is like 'the peace that is past understanding.' I never think of that phrase," she added, after a pause, "without a little puzzle of mind about it. Aunt Anne says it is so altogether nice after a mournful length of sermon; but Aunt Anne is terrible at times. I often wonder what people who do not know her well must think of her. What I mean is— Well, it is hard to state, Pardy. Is the peace so great that we have no earthly possibility of apprehending its relief from the unrest of this life?—or that— Don't you dislike to stumble in thinking? I—it does not seem to me as if I wanted peace. Is that dreadful?"

"No, dear. But some day you may, and there are many kinds. I sometimes crave relief from mere intellectual turmoil. Another yearns after the day when his endless battle with the sensual shall cease. One could go on. Perhaps for you, and for all, the indefiniteness of the promise is part of the value of its mystery. That is widely true. You may one day come to love some man, and to entirely believe in his promise of love. Yet you will not fully know what

that means,—you cannot; and yet you trust it, for the inner life after all rests on a system of credits, as business does. Do you follow me?"

"Yes," she said, with a little doubt. "Yes, I think I do; and yet it is not peace I want, if that means just merely rest."

"Oh, no; surely not finality of action. Remember that with that promise of peace is to come increase of knowledge of God, which means all knowledge. We see and hear now the beautiful in nature, and are troubled by its apparent discords. There the true harmonies of it all shall be ours to know. It is like learning the reasons for the music we hear now with only joy and wonder."

"That may be so. To like or love a person, a friend, is pleasant; but to love and also fully to understand a friend is better. Then one is at ease, one has true peace, because we have then knowledge with love."

"That was nicely put, my child, but one can't talk out in full such subjects as this. One can only sow seed and trust to the fertilization of time. Where did you get your quotation about drifting?"

"I do not know; Aunt Anne would."

"Oh, that, of course," said Lyndsay; "she told us once that not to know the name of the man you quote is a form of ingratitude: to take the gift and forget the giver."

"That is so like her: to label want of memory as intellectual ingratitude."

"When we laughed," said Lyndsay, "she added that quotations were mean admissions of our own incapa-

city of statement. Claiborne was dining with us,— you should have heard his comments. You know how perplexingly droll she is at times, and when she is in what the boys call a 'gale' of merry mind-play."

"It sounds familiar. Aunt Anne is not above repeating her jests. I recall it now. She insisted gaily that it is bad manners to call up the spirit of a man, and accept his contribution to your needs, and then to say, 'Sorry I forgot your name,' and just show him to the door of your mind. She is great fun, sometimes."

"Yes, sometimes. The fun is not always honeyed, or — if it looks so — of a sudden the bees crawl out of it and sting folks; but who can wonder? If it helps Anne to clap an occasional mustard-plaster on me, dear lady, she is welcome."

"Once, Pardy, in Venice, she was in dreadful pain, and some women got in by mistake. She was perfectly delightful to those people. When they went away, I said, 'Aunty, how much better you are!' And what do you think she replied? 'You will never know, dear, whether you have good manners or not until you have pain for one of your visitors,' and then she fainted. I never knew her to faint, and I was dreadfully scared."

"She ought to have excused herself," said Lyndsay. "It was heroic foolishness."

"I suppose it was."

"You need not suppose,— it was! I hate to think of how she suffers. Look at yonder lot of firs and spruce with the gray, green, drooping mosses on them. After a rain that hillside looks like a great cascade.

You see the moss hangs in arrow-head shapes, like those of falling water. It is so hard to set these simple things in words — you can describe them with half a dozen pencil-marks. I envy you the power. I have to stick to my old habit of word-sketches, about which our friend, the doctor, once wrote, as you know. On Sunday we will have a run up-stream, and a big wood-and-water chat."

As he spoke the canoe slipped around a little headland, and was at once close to the cliff camp.

"That does n't look very peaceful," cried Rose. "Oh, they will be killed!" and she started up.

"Keep still," said her father; "you will upset us." What she saw looked grim enough: a tangle of three boys, rolling down some fifteen feet of graveled slope; then the three afoot; two or three savage blows, fierce cries, and a sudden pause, as Lyndsay called out:

"Hullo there! — quit that, Jack! Stop, Ned!"

Their faces were very red, their clothes covered with dirt. There was silence and instant obedience. Mrs. Lyndsay stood imploring at the top of the cliff, and Anne was standing by with a queer smile on her face, and her fingers in a book.

"Who began it, boys? What is it all about?"

Jack spoke first: "Dick hit Ned, and he 's too small for him, and so I hit Dick."

"He might have let us alone. I 'm as good as Dick any time," said the slightest of the lads, with no show of gratitude.

"He said I was a fool," explained Dick. "Ned 's quite a match, but Jack can't keep out of a row."

"And so it was two to one, was it? I can't stand that: no more fishing to-day or to-morrow, Master Jack."

"Yes, sir."

"And now, what was this war about?"

"Well, Ned he said Claverhouse was a bloody villain, and I said he was a gallant gentleman, and Ned said I was a fool."

"That was a difference of sentiment which has cost blood before," laughed Anne, from the bluff. Ned grinned as he wiped a bloody nose.

"Oh, do keep quiet, Anne," said her brother; "this is my affair. How is it, Ned, and you, Dick? Is it settled? If not, there is room back of the house. This fighting before women is not to my taste. But is all this just as Dick says, Ned?"

"Why, father, I—I said it." And Dick's face flushed.

"You are right, sir; I beg pardon. As you seem indisposed to have it out, shake hands; but an honest shake. It must be peace or war; no sullenness."

"All right, sir. I 'm sorry, Dick."

"I 'm not—very," said Dick; but he put his hand on Ned's shoulder, and kindly offered a second handkerchief.

"Now, you mad Indians, go and make yourselves decent. It is time for luncheon."

Rose went up the cliff to where Miss Anne still stood. "I think it is dreadful, most dreadful."

"I used to, my dear, but on the whole it clears the air, and the boys seem none the worse for it. Jack is usually the ferment; Dick is hot of temper; and

Ned, my dear Ned, would die on the rack for a sentiment."

When the family sat down to the luncheon, a stranger would have detected no evidence of the recent warfare. The mother, once or twice, cast an anxious look at the slight enlargement of Ned's nose, but, to the surprise of Rose, what had seemed to her an angry contest made no kind of alteration in the good humor of the lads. Ned was as usual silent; but Dick and Jack were busily discussing the color of the trout they had taken: some were dark, some brighter in tint.

It was the good habit of this old-fashioned household to invite the talk and questions of the children.

"You got the blacker ones at Grime's run, near the mouth," said Mr. Lyndsay; "the others in the river below. Well, what do you make of it?"

"Is n't the bottom dark in the places where the fish are dark?" said Dick.

"Put it backward," replied his father, "and you will have a part of the truth."

"But how could that act?" said Dick.

"It must act somehow," said Jack.

"Is it the light?" said Ned.

"But light blackens the skin, or heat does," reasoned Dick.

"The true cause is curious. It is an action of light through the eyes, and thence, by the brain pathways, on to the numberless little pigment-cells of the skin, which are able to shrink or enlarge, and thus change the hue of the whole outside of the fish. Blind fish do not change their hue."

"But that is not the way we get brown," said Rose.

"No, not at all. Sun-tan is not caused by the sun's heat; it is an effect of the chemical rays."

"A kind of photography, Pardy?"

"Yes, more complete than you can fancy; the sunlight falls nowhere without leaving a record, only we cannot recover it as we can the photograph of the camera. In fact, it is probable that every reflection from everything and onto everything leaves positive records. It was Professor Draper, I think, who played with this pretty idea, that, if we had the means of development, we might thus win back pictures of every event since the world was made."

"I like that," said Anne. "What would one desire to see if we could recover these lost memorials?"

There was a little pause at this.

"Come, Ned."

"Oh, I 'd want to see old Cromwell when he was looking at Charles, just lying there dead."

"But he never did see him then," said Jack. "You would n't have wanted to, Ned, if you had been that scoundrel."

"Yes, I should," cried Ned; "I 'd have known then if I was right."

Anne looked at him aside, with brief curiosity. He often puzzled her.

"Cromwell a scoundrel!" he murmured to himself.

"And you, Jack?"

"Oh, the cemetery hill at Gettysburg, just when the rebel line broke; but"— and his face flushed— "just to have been there. That would have been better."

"And what would you like to see, Anne?" said Lyndsay.

"Oh, a hundred things!" and her eyes lit up. At last she said, "Yes; I think if it were only one thing, I would say, St. Paul on Mars' Hill."

"I think I shall rest content with Anne's choice," said Mrs. Lyndsay. "But, ah me, there might be many, many things."

"Dick, it is your turn," said Lyndsay.

"I—I—don't know. Yes, yes. The days of the great lizards—and things," he added, comprehensively; "and that beast with a brain in his head and one in his tail. And, father, may I see the insides of that salmon? He has a lot of what the men call sea-lice on him."

"Certainly. He loses them very soon in fresh water. It is a sign of a clean run fish. Yes, of course. Do as you like, my boy."

"Mrs. Maybrook was here this morning," said Mrs. Lyndsay. "I was away. You and Anne must see her, Rose. She is really a personage. I, at least, have never seen any one like her. She left word that the little boy was sick at Joe Colkett's,—the upper clearing, you know, Archie; and could we do something to help them? There is no doctor for fifty miles. I thought, Rose, you might take some things, and go over after lunch, and see what it is."

Now, Rose was salmon-bitten, but it was characteristic that she said at once she would go. A glance at the mother's face decided her. Anne, who understood everybody with strange readiness, nodded to her gently, and Rose had her reward. It is pleasant to

be clearly read by those we love. Then the chat went on, gay or grave, but plenty of it, and with ample sauce of folly.

As the girl went out onto the porch, Lyndsay said to his sister, "I was sorry for Rose. Her first day of salmon-fishing. Sometimes my good Margaret is — well, a little too positive about these confounded duties. She might — "

"No, Archie. Rose understood her mother. Of course, she did not like it, but she was right, and was perfectly sweet about it."

"I shall take her up myself, and wait for her," he went on. "If we start early, she will be in time for a late cast. Hang the black flies! — get a smudge, Tom," he called. "I suppose Margaret is right. Even the simulation of goodness is valuable. Of course, Anne, as Marcus Aurelius said, 'Affect a virtue —' No, confound it! he says, 'If you have not a virtue, make believe to have it, and by and by you will have it."

Anne smiled. "I think there is a statute of limitations for some of us."

"Come into my room," he added. "I want to read you my last chapter. It is on the value of habits. You can sew if you like."

"Archie! You never saw me sew in your life. It is Margaret's resource, not mine. I never could comprehend its interest for women. M. A. was a bit of a prig in my opinion; but, as to the commentary, look out, — previous experience should have warned you, — there will be two commentaries," and she went in after him, laughing.

As he passed Rose, he said, "By the way, and to put your conscience at ease before you fish again, here is a note-book of mine in which you may see that while hunting is forbidden to the clergy, fishing is allowed. The reasons are amusing. Ned or Dick will help you, but the Latin is easy."

"Walton quotes it," added Lyndsay.

"No, only in part," said Anne.

"You are intolerable. Your literary conscience is like Margaret's moral exactness. There is no living with either of you."

"Don't believe him, Rose; but keep for me the quotation."

She devoured books, and digested them also, with the aid of a rather too habitual acidity of criticism; but what was in them she never forgot.

"Come, now, Archie."

Rose took the note-book and sat down. This was what she read, from the Decretals of Lyons, 1671: "Sed quare prohibetur venari, et non piscari? Quia forte piscatio sine clamore, venatio non; vel quia major est delectatio in venatione; dum enim quis et in venatione nihil potest de divinis cogitare."[1]

"Ambrose speaks of it in like manner in his third homily,—the old humbug!" said Miss Rose, over whose shoulder Dick had been looking.

"I guess they took a sly shot, now and then, at the king's deer, Rosy Posy."

[1] Until within two years, it was lawful to fish on Sunday in New York, but unlawful to shoot.

CHAPTER IV

BOUT three o'clock, as Rose stood by the canoe in a pretty hot sun, she saw Ned and Dick making ready for another trip to the brook.

"Pardy," she said, "do let Jack go with them."

"It won't be half the fun without Jack," urged Ned. Lyndsay hesitated. "Well, yes, Rose."

She was away up the steps in a moment, and found Jack deep in an Arctic voyage.

"You are to go, Jack," she cried.

"I don't want to."

"That 's a first-class fib."

"Well, I don't want to go."

"Come, Jack; you hurt me; and I asked—"

"By George!" he cried, "I 'll go."

"You must want to go."

"I do."

"Go and thank Pardy."

Jack stood a moment, and then Rose kissed him.

"Drat you women!" said the youngster, and walked away and down to the canoes. He went straight to his father.

"I am very much obliged to you, sir."

"All right, old man. Off with you."

"By George, Dick, but M. A. is a gentleman," said Jack, as the canoe left the beach. "He might have rubbed it in, and he just did n't."

"How 's your nose, you small poet cuss?" said Dick. "I cut my knuckles on those sharp teeth of yours."

"That 's what they 're for, Ruby"; and so they were away, singing as they went:

"The king shall enjoy his own again,"—

to the amusement of the two Indians.

"I should have sent the Gaspé men," said Lyndsay to Rose, as he stood following the canoe with his eyes. "If anything happens, they would think first of the boys, and next of themselves. In Mr. Lo I have less faith."

"But why?"

"Experience, prejudice, color — distrust. Once I was on Lake Superior, Rose, in a boat in a storm. Our two Indian guides simply lay down and wilted. We could get no help from either. And a curious thing happened that night. We landed on a beach at the river of the Evil Manitou. When the Indians learned that I meant to camp there, they tried to steal a canoe and run away, explaining that to sleep there would cause the death of some one of their people. I could not stand this, because we needed the third canoe. It ended by our keeping watch, revolver in hand, all night. When we reached Duluth, an old Indian — a Chippeway, of course — was waiting to tell one of my gnides that his sister had died that morning."

"What did he say to you, papa?"

"Only, 'Me telly you so.'"

"And did n't you feel very, very badly? You know, dear M. A., you are quite a bit superstitious yourself."

"As to the first question, No. I was sorry, but — Get into the canoe — so — facing the bow. I sha'n't see your face when you talk, and I can fib without those nice eyes of yours making righteous comments."

"A *tête-à-tête* back to back might have its advantages," she returned, laughing, "for a *cœur-à-cœur* at least, papa."

"I trust that is in the dim distance, my child."

"How serious you are, Pardy!"

He was troubled at times lest this best of his dear comrades should find another man whom she would love more than she loved the father-friend.

"And," she went on, "would you have shot the Indian if he had taken or tried to take the boat, Pardy?"

"Oh, no! The revolver was not loaded. Our Anglo-Saxon fists would have answered, as we were four to two."

"But are n't these Indians Catholics?"

"If you mean that religion puts an end to these little or large superstitions, No. Kismet, the Fates, our Angle ancestors' Wyrda — the goddess who decreed deaths in battle and spared the brave awhile — she became God for the Christian Angles: then the will of God, and now the law of God, and for some the laws of nature. It is only a transmutation of phrase. We remain fatalists, and change the label."

"But it seems to me," said Rose, "a long way from Wyrda, who was rather indecisive, I remember, to changeless law."

"Rose, you are dreadful! If ever I begin to talk loosely, down comes Anne or you with your confounded rigidity of statement. Don't marry a fool, Rose, or he and you will have a dreadful time."

"No, papa, never! Heaven forbid! But is n't it helpful at least to know—"

"You can't drag me any further into these deep waters to-day.

'To-day we give to trifles,
And if to-morrow rifles
The honey thefts we won,
At least the pleasant hours
Head down among the flowers,
Swinging jolly in the sun—'

nobody can quite take away. I forget the rest of it."

"I am happy enough, dear Marcus Aurelius, to dare to be grave. I have a pocketful of moods at your order.

'Eat, drink, and be merry,
Dance, sing, and rejoice,
With claret and sherry,
Theorbo and voice.'

For we all shall be past it a hundred years hence."

"I don't know that, Rose. I like to think, with Anne, that in a world to come

'The angel Laughter spreads her broadest wings.'

We may laugh at other things, but laugh we shall."

"Dear Aunt Anne! The angel of laughter! I think I can hear him."

"Just to go back a moment, Rose. You can't talk out these deeper things. I, at least, must use the pen

if I am at all able to discuss them. There never was truth in text or brief sayings that for me could stand alone. Even a proverb needs limbs of comment to get about usefully among mankind. Books of mere maxims I detest. Don't! I see you mean to reply. Good-by to common sense to-day."

"Aunt Anne was talking last night," said Rose, "about the value of nonsense. I think it was apropos of just the very worst conundrum you ever heard,— you know what a lot of them the boys have. This one I have made a solemn vow never to repeat. She was wondering why the novelists never make people talk refreshing nonsense the way all really reasonable folks do sometimes."

"I wonder more, Rose, why they so rarely get really good talk into their conversations, talk such as we do hear, gay and grave by turns. Of course they say of their characters things clever enough."

"That is terribly true,— one tires of the endless essays about their people. Why not let them say of one another what is to be said. Aunt Anne says she hates to have a critical providence forever hovering about a story."

"A good deal of the personal talk in novels is needed to carry on the tale. Still, there ought to be room for doing this in a way to make the talk in itself amusing at times, and not merely coldly developmental of character."

"Wait till I write my novel," cried Rose. "Every one in it shall be clever,— English clever. It hurts my sense of the reality of the people in books to be told they are able, or this and that, and have sense

of humor, and then not to find these qualities in what they say."

"You may have too much of it," he returned. "The mass of readers are unaccustomed to a selected world where to want to amuse and interest, and to be amused, is part, at least, of the social education. Your book would lack readers, just as George Meredith's books do, where, surely, the people talk enough, both of brilliant wisdom and as shining wit."

"But they keep me in a state of mental tension; I don't like that."

"No. I said there could be too much in a book, in a novel. These books keep one on a strain. That may suit some people, some moods, but it is n't what I read novels for. Now, Cranford is my ideal."

"I knew you would say Cranford, papa. But is n't it a little too — too photographic? I met in the Tyrol, papa, a lady who knew many of the people in Cranford. Did you know it was called Knutsford?"

"Ah, Canute's ford."

"Yes. She told me such an odd thing about Knutsford. When a bride is on her way to the church the bridesmaids scatter sand before her, and this is because when Canute crossed the ford he was seated on the bank, and getting the sand out of his shoe,— and just then a bride came over the stepping-stones; the king cast the sand after her, and said, 'May your offspring be as many as the sands in my shoe.' Now, is n't that a pretty story?"

"A *very* pretty story. I shall write it on the blank page of my Cranford."

"Hullo, Tom; are those bear-tracks?"

They were close now to a sandy beach.

"Yes, and fresh, too."

"If Jack saw this he would go wild," said Rose. "And the little marks?"

"Them 's cubs. They 've been roun' here a sight."

As they went on, the hills became higher and more steep. At their bases lay the wreckage of countless years, the work of ice and heat and storms piled high along the shores. It was covered with dense greenery of beech and birch and poplar. Out of this, in darker masses, broad columns of tamarack, pine, and spruce seemed to be climbing the long upper slopes of the hills which, still higher, lifted gray granite summits, free of growths.

"How fast do we go?" said Rose.

"It is good poling on this stream to make three miles an hour. On the St. Anne there is one ten-mile stretch which takes all day. Watch the movement of using the poles. See how graceful it is,—the strong push, the change of hands, the recovery. Ah!—" Suddenly the bowman let go his pole, which Tom seized as it came to the stern.

"Now, that 's a good thing to see, Rose. He caught it in the rocks, and let it go. If he held it, it would break, or he go over, and possibly upset us,—no trifle in these wild waters. It requires instant decision."

"I see. Are n't these the clearings?"

"Yes."

And now, on the farther side, the hills fell away, and the stream grew broad and less swift. A wide alluvial space, dotted with elms, lay to the left, with here and there the half-hidden smoke of a log-house.

"Beyond this is a hopeless wilderness, my dear; and to-morrow, Sunday, we shall go up and look at it. And you shall draw a little, if you are wicked enough, and I will make some word sketches." They were now poling along close to the farther shore.

"Who is that fishing across the river?"

"It must be the island camp men."

Rose set her opera-glass and looked. In a moment she put it down, conscious that the man in the boat was doing as to her precisely the thing she had done. She had a queer feeling that she did not like it; why, she would have been puzzled to say.

"Who are they? Oh, yes, I remember; you spoke of them before."

"One is Mr. Oliver Ellett. I think he must be Oliver Ellett's son. We were at Harvard. The other is a Mr. Carington."

"He 's an old hand up here. Fished here a heap these years. Casts an awful nice line. Seed him yesterday. Shot a seal last week, they was a-tellin' me."

"I should hate a man that could shoot a seal," said Rose. "They look so human, and, then, they can be taught to talk. He can't be a nice man."

"Them seals spiles the fishin', Miss Rose. They ain't got no business to spile the fishin'. As for them seals a-talkin', that 's a pretty large story, miss; whatever, I don't go to doubt you heerd 'em."

"But it is true."

"I 'd like to *con*verse with one," said Tom, in his most liberal voice. "He 'd git my opinion."

And now the canoe was ashore, and Rose and her father set out through the woods, and by and by

came upon a rude clearing and a rough-looking log-cabin, surrounded with fire-scarred and decaying stumps. The huge wood-pile, as high as the eaves, struck Rose.

"How that makes one think of the terrible cold and the loneliness of winter here,— no books, no company; what can they do?"

"It recalls to me," said Lyndsay, "the curious use of the word 'stove' in Labrador, where, even more than here, it is important. You ask how many people there are, say, at Mingan? The reply is sure to be, 'Oh, there are twenty-seven stoves.' But how many people? 'I don't know; there are twenty-seven stoves.'"

At the open door Lyndsay knocked, and in a moment came through the gloom within a tall, sallow woman. A soiled and much-mended brown gingham gown hung down from broad but lean shoulders over hips as lean and large. As she came to the door, she hastily buttoned her dress awry across the fleshless meagerness of her figure.

"How do you do, Mrs. Colkett?" said Lyndsay.

"Now, ain't it Mr. Lyndsay? I 'm that wore out I did n't know you. Set down"; and she wiped a chair and a rickety stool with the skirt of her gown. "I did n't know you, sir, till you came to speak. Was you wantin' Joe?"

"No; we came over because Dorothy Maybrook left word your boy was sick. This is my daughter Rose. We brought some lemons and other trifles. The little man might like them."

As she turned, Rose took note of the unkempt hair, the slight stoop of the woman's unusually tall figure,

and the shoeless, uncovered, and distorted feet. Not less the desolate, comfortless cabin caught her eye,—the rude wooden furniture, and the bed, whence came the hoarse breathing of the sick child. To her surprise, Mrs. Colkett said:

"Dory Maybrook 's always a-fussin' over other folks' concerns, 'stead of mindin' her own affairs."

Lyndsay, who was standing beside Rose, looked up at the woman.

"I think," he said, "Dorothy is incapable of wanting to be other than kind."

"S'pose so. She might of let on she was goin' a-beggin'."

"Oh, it was not that," cried Rose, bewildered by the woman's mode of receiving a kindness.

"Dare say: maybe not. All the same, me and Joe ain't never asked no favors. Set down, miss."

"No, thank you," returned Rose, and began to empty her basket of fruit and other luxuries.

"We came over," said Lyndsay, "because my wife thought you might need help."

"It ain't no use. It was n't never no use. That boy 's a-goin' like the rest."

"I trust not so bad as that."

"Yes; he 's a-goin' like them others."

"You have lost other children?" said Rose, gently, looking up as she cleared the basket.

"Yes; two, and he 's the last. They had n't no great time while they was alive, and now they 're lyin' out in the wood, and no more mark over 'em than if they was dead dogs. There won't no one care."

"Yes, I shall care; I do care, Mrs. Colkett. Oh, is n't it hard to say why such things do happen?"

"Happen!" said the woman. "Dorothy, she says God took them children. I 'd like to know why? Preachin' 's easy business. God! What do I know about God, except that he 's done nothin' for me? And I 'm to be thankful,—what for?" As she spoke a hoarse sound came from the bed. "For that poor little man a-croakin' there, I suppose!"

As Rose was about to reply, her father touched her arm, and, understanding that argument was thus hinted to be unwise, she said:

"Let me see the little fellow?"

"You may, if you 've a mind. 'T ain't no good. When it is n't any good, it is n't any good, and that 's all there is to it."

Rose went up to the bed. A sickening odor filled the close air. She saw beneath her a stout little boy of ten, hot and dusky red with fever, his lips purple, two small hands tightly locked, with the thumbs in the palms, the head, soaked with the death-sweat, rolling rhythmically from side to side. The woman followed her.

"Has he had any one to see him?" said Lyndsay.

"Yes. We had a doctor from down river. He came twice. He was n't no use. He took 'most all the money we had left."

"We shall be glad to help you."

"Much obliged, sir. It 's only to bury him now. There 's one mercy anyways,—it don't cost much for funerals up here. It 's just get a preacher and dig a hole and my man to make a box. Thank you, all the same."

Here was poverty so brutal in its results that even the pretense of sentiment was absent. Rose was troubled. Before her was death, and it was new to her. She turned to her father. "Oh, can't something be done?"

He tried a moment with unprofessional awkwardness to find the pulse. There was none he could feel. "What did the doctor say? What is the matter with the boy, Mrs. Colkett?"

"He left some medicine stuff; but laws! the child could n't take it. The doctor he says it 's diphthery, or something like that. I don't rightly know. It don't matter none."

All this was said in a slow monotone, as if, Rose thought,—almost as if the woman, the mother, had been an uninterested spectator. After a pause she added, in the same slow voice:

"If he 's goin' he 'll go, and that 's all there is of it."

At the word diphtheria, Lyndsay recoiled, pushing Rose back from the bed. "Harry!" he exclaimed. "It was that! Go out, Rose! Go at once!"

"Lord, is it ketchin'?" said the woman, shrinking back from the bed. "That fool never said so. If I 'm to git it, I guess the mischief 's done. If Joe he gits it, Hiram 'll have to make the box."

"Come away, Rose."

The girl was divided between horror and pity. At the door she turned.

"I am not afraid. Let me stay, father,—I must stay!"

"No; it is useless, and might be worse than useless." As she obeyed him, a short, squat figure of a

man coming into the doorway darkened the dimly lit room. He moved aside as Rose went out into the sun. Lyndsay went by him also, and the man, turning back, said, "It 's about all over, I guess. We 've got more 'n we can handle, sir. Seems there 's no end of troubles."

"Come this way," returned Lyndsay. "And you, Rose, wait by the fence."

He saw but too clearly that the stout, ruddy little man had been taking whisky. Joe Colkett followed him.

"Good Lord, my man, that child is dying,— will be dead, I am sure, before night; and here you are in liquor just when that poor woman most wants help."

"I ain't that drunk I can't do chores. Fact is, Mr. Lyndsay, I went down to ask Dory Maybrook jus' to lend me a little money. That doctor he took most all my wood wage."[1]

"Well?"

"She would n't do it."

"Well?"

"She said she 'd come up and help, an' if my old woman wanted any she might have it. That ain't no way to treat a man."

"No," said Lyndsay, with such emphasis as satisfied his own conscience, and also the duller sense of the lumberman. "No,— that is not the way to treat a *man*. Listen to me, Joe: Don't drink any more."

"I ain't any," said Joe.

"Really?"

[1] Money earned by lumbering in the winter woods.

"Not a drop. It was just a bit I had left."

"Come to me when it is all over, and I will pay the doctor's bill, and you can help clear off the brush back of my cabin."

"Thank you, sir."

"You don't drink often, I think. Why should you now? Was it trouble — about your child?"

"He was n't my child."

"What!" exclaimed Lyndsay, puzzled; "how is that?"

"My wife was a widder, you see, and them was all her first man's; I never had no child. 'T ain't like it was my own child. He was awful spiled, that boy. I licked him two weeks this Sunday comin' for makin' fire by the wood-pile. Gosh, what a row Susie did make!"

"My God!" exclaimed Lyndsay.

The man understood him well enough.

"Oh, I don't go to say I did n't like him none. Lord, I 'd done most anything to git that boy well. I wanted that money to help put him underground. It don't cost much buryin' up here, but it ain't to be done for nothin', and you 've got to look ahead. There 's the minister 's got to be fetched, and — and —"

Here the man sat down on a stump, and putting a palm on each temple and an elbow on each knee, looked silently down at his mother earth.

Respect for the moods of men is one of the delicacies of the best manners. Lyndsay was still a minute. Then he put a hand on Joe's shoulder.

"How else can we help you?"

"It 's my woman I 'm a-thinkin' of." He spoke without looking up. "This thing 's the last and the wust,— it 's goin' to down her awful. And there ain't nothin' I can do,— nothin'!" Here he passed his sleeve across his eyes, and then glanced at the unaccustomed moisture, and had a dulled remembrance of having cried long years before; he failed to recall why or just when.

"You 're a-thinkin' I 'm a mean man to be a-drinkin' and that child a-dyin' in yon; and that woman! That's where it gits a man. I ain't been a bad man to her; I 've took care of them children right along, Mr. Lyndsay, and I never beat her none, and I don't mind me I ever used no bad words to her, not when I was wore out, and — and — had n't a shillin', and was busted up with blackleg.[1] I don't git it clear, sir; I don't care most none for that child, but she might kill me if it would git it well. I don't see nothin' to do but drink, and that 's the fact."

Lyndsay stood silent in thought. He had seen enough of life not to wonder that drink could be distinctly regarded as, under stress of circumstances, an available resource. He had also seen men or women capable of a single affection, and of only one. What there was to know of this man's relations to his wife and her offspring had been uncovered with frank brutality. He had said there was nothing for him except to drink.

"But if you love your wife, my man, you want to help her, and if you drink you are useless,— and, in fact, you add to her troubles."

[1] The scurvy of the lumberman,— more rare nowadays.

"It ain't that, sir. Fact is, she don't care a'most none for me,— and there 's the truth. You would n't think, sir, what a pretty woman she was. She took me to get them children a home and feed. Dory, she knows. I ain't given to tellin' it round, but you 're different. Somehow it helps a man to say things out."

Here was the strange hurt of a limited tenderness, with all this rudeness of self-disclosure, and, too, some of the stupid, careless immodesty of drink.

"I take it kindly," said Lyndsay, "that you have told me the whole of your troubles. Come over and see me. I left some tobacco on the table for you."

"Much obliged, sir," and, rising, Joe took Mr. Lyndsay's offered hand. "I 'll come," he said, and walked back toward the cabin, while Lyndsay, beckoning to Rose, turned into the ox-road which led to the shore.

For a while they were silent. Then he said, "This child is dying of a fever; no word of the diphtheria to your mother or even to Anne."

"One can escape mama easily, but Aunt Anne is a relentless questioner."

"I will speak to her."

"That would be better, I think. How horrible it all was! And that woman! Do you think she really did not care?"

"No, no, dear. Imagine a life of constant poverty, utter want of means,— to-day's wages meaning to-morrow's bread; a cruel soil; a mortgaged farm at that; then one child after another dying; the helplessness of want of money; the utter lack of all re-

sources; the lonely, meager life. This woman has the moral disease of one long, unchanging monotony of despair."

"I see — I see — you know more, and that makes you forgive more."

"Some one has said, Rose, that to be able to explain all is to be able to forgive all, and that only One can truly explain all."

"It seems to me, Pardy, that poverty has more temptations in it than wealth, and more explanations of sin, too. Is n't the man a brute, Pardy? He had been drinking, and to drink at such a time!"

"No; he is coarse, but not a bad fellow. You or I would have much we could turn to if trouble came upon us. This man has nothing. It does not surprise me that he drank. It is not his habit. But let us drop it all now. I am sorry I took you." He was not unwise enough to speak of the anguish of dread which had possessed him as he stood by the bedside, and now made haste to add, "And yet the lesson was a good one. You won't want to fish, I fear?" He had in some ways appreciative touch of his kind, and knew the daughter well.

"No, no; not to-day. Let us go home."

"As you please, dear"; and they slid away swiftly down the gleaming water as the evening shadows crept across the stream.

After awhile Rose said, looking up, "You must have seen, oh, so many people die, Pardy."

"Yes; Death was for four years a constant comrade. I had always a firm belief I would not be killed. Some men were always predicting their

"Oh, I think we are very much alike, Anne"; at which there was a general outbreak of mirth, for these people were much given to laughter.

Lyndsay declared that he had observed the resemblance.

"And the boys inherit our goodness," added Anne, demurely. "At least, it seemed to me I had evidence of it pretty early to-day; but then the hymn says, '*Let* boys delight to bark and bite.' I disremember the rest, as Peter, our cook, says." At this Ned gave his aunt's gown a gentle pull, by way of respectfully intimating that she was getting them into difficulties.

"'Let' is permissive," she went on. "I was not really disturbed, Archie"; for her brother was now curiously regarding a rather distinct scratch on Dick's ruddy cheek.

"Raspberry thorns, Dicky?" he said, maliciously.

"No, sir."

"Sleep-cats," said Anne. "That was always our nursery explanation."

"What then? Another row? I thought we had had enough for a week."

"And on Sunday morning, Dick!" said the mother. "I would n't."

Anne looked up, amused at this latter declaration.

"Never mind, Margaret," said her husband. "What was it about, boys?"

"Oh, it was n't much of a row. It was only a scrimmage," said Dick. "Ned said King James cut off Raleigh's head because he would smoke tobacco. Did you ever hear such nonsense?"

"But Aunt Anne told me King James wrote a book against smoking,—did n't you, aunt?" urged the smaller lad.

"And I said it was ridiculous," cried Dick.

"And Jack he up and said it was n't, because if he was a king, and people did n't do as he wanted, he would cut off their heads, like that," said Ned, knocking off the end of an egg, by way of illustration.

"And so we had a melley," remarked Jack. "It was n't much, and that 's all there was of it. *I* don't see why people make such a fuss."

"Suppose you let this suffice for the day, you rascals," said Mr. Lyndsay.

"Yes, sir."

"And it was n't Raleigh who brought tobacco to England, was it, Aunt Anne?" said Ned. "I told Dick it was Hawkins, and he would n't believe me. I saw it in—"

"Where?"

Ned hesitated. His habit of lying on his stomach on the floor in the long winter afternoons, with some monstrous quarto, was matter for unending chaff on the part of the twins.

"Where was it, old Book Gobbler?" cried Dick. "Where was it?"

"It was in Hollinshead's Chronicles," returned the lad, coloring.

"You are right," said Aunt Anne. "You would do better to read a little more yourself, Jack, than to laugh at Ned."

"What 's the use, if I am going to West Point?" said Jack.

"You will find out, I fancy, when you get there," remarked Rose. "I am told it is dreadful."

"Well, there 's time enough to think about it," returned Jack, with his usual philosophical calm. "I wish it was n't Sunday. Oh, dear!" and he groaned in anticipation of the dullness of the day.

"Jack!" exclaimed the mother. "Oh, Jack!"

"Well, you can't go to church, and there 's no fishing; and, mother, you know you don't like us to read novels on Sunday, and I 've read voyages until I know all there are up here,—and I don't see what a fellow is to do."

"I shall read the service before you all scatter."

"Well, that does n't take long."

As a means of passing the time, this device of her sister-in-law enormously delighted Anne. "I confess to a certain amount of sympathy with the unemployed. It is a Sabbath lockout."

Margaret turned on her with abruptness; but Lyndsay said, quickly:

"My dear Anne, this is Margaret's business. Keep out of other folks' small wars. You are as bad as Jack."

"That is true, Archie. I am a conversational free lance. I beg pardon, Margaret. I will never, never do it again."

"Not until the next time," returned Mrs. Lyndsay, with unusual ascerbity. "It is really of no moment," she added, "but I like to manage the boys myself."

"You are right. I was wrong to meddle."

"I propose," said Lyndsay, "that the two Gaspé men shall take you fellows up the Arrapedia. You will find it hard work if they let you pole, and you

can't drown there if you try; and the black flies, mosquitos, and midges will make you miserable. And, Jack, come here,— nearer. This in your ear: at the second bend there is an old clearing, and under the eaves of the cabin — now, don't let it out — there is a mighty nest of hornets. I recommend it to your attention. I owe them a grudge."

Jack's face flushed with joy.

"Thank you, sir."

Mrs. Lyndsay said, "What is it, Archie?"

"Oh, nothing; a little secret between Jack the Giant Killer and his pa." Lyndsay had a pretty distinct notion that fighting hornets as a Sunday distraction would not be altogether to his wife's taste.

"Don't tell, Jack."

"No, sir."

"Honor bright!"

"All right, sir."

"Won't you tell us?" asked Ned of his father.

"No."

"But I have an irresistible curiosity," said the boy.

"And I have an impenetrable resolution to hold my tongue. You are to sail under sealed orders." One of his delights was to offer problems to this sturdy young intellect. "Suppose, sir,"— and he put the old scholiast question,—"If the impenetrable were to meet the irresistible, what would happen?"

"That would be a row," said Jack.

Ned had a deep dislike to being beaten by these absurd questions. His detestation of intellectual defeat was as deep as his brother's disgust at physical discomfiture. He hesitated, flushed, and replied:

"It could n't be at all, father, because it says in the Bible that the world will be destroyed, and, if there was an impenetrable, that could n't be at all,—I say it *could n't* be."

"Shade of Confucius!" exclaimed Anne.

"But suppose."

"I can't." He had a sense of wrath at the question. At last he said, "You might as well ask a fellow what would happen if the impossible met the incomprehensible."

"Glory! what dictionary words!" cried Dick.

"Pretty well, old fellow," said Lyndsay, laughing as they rose.

"Oh, I hate things like that."

"Rose, Rose, put some lunch in a basket. We shall make a day of it. We will take the skiff and Tom. Put my note-book and pencils in the basket, and your sketch-book; and don't forget my field-glass. Won't you come, Margaret?"

"No; I am going to Mrs. Maybrook's this morning, and, Archie, I want Hiram to attend to something at the church where Harry is. Don't trouble about me."

"Anne, won't you come with us?"

"No; I am not good for all day. I shall go and have a talk with Mrs. Maybrook this afternoon. If I lie down until then, I may manage it. Margaret says it sweetens one for a week to see that woman. I mean to try the recipe."

"I am getting very curious about her," said Rose; "and there is so much to do, and I must catch a salmon to-morrow."

"We kill salmon," said Lyndsay.

"But you catch them with a pole and a line."

"No; they catch themselves; and we call it a rod, miss, please."

"Yes, Marcus Aurelius."

"At ten o'clock, sauce-box; and get your wits in order."

"Ay, ay, sir!" and she touched her forehead and went to secure their lunch.

Anne took a book, as usual, and went out to lie under the porch in a hammock. The boats got away, and still she lay quiet. Delicate of features, the mouth and large gray eyes her only beauties; her nose fine, but large for the rest of her face, and aquiline; her forehead square, with a mass of brown hair set too high above its pallor for good looks, perhaps justified the common notion that Anne Lyndsay never had been even pretty. Years of pain and endurance had lessened, not increased, her natural irritability, and given to her face an expression of singular force. It may be added that she was a trifle vain of the small hands and feet which she, like all of her people, possessed.

As she lay at more than usual ease, dreamily happy as she noticed the sun, the shadows, and the far-stretching curves of the river, she saw a dugout, what in the North is called a pirogue,[1] put out from the farther bank. A woman stood in the stern and urged it across the swift current with notable strength and dexterity. Presently it ran onto the beach, and Dorothy Maybrook came up the steps, a basket in her hand.

[1] Spanish, *piriagua*.

As to most things, all books, and people in general, Anne Lyndsay had a highly vitalized curiosity; but, as to this woman, it was more eager than usual. She was mildly skeptical as to the fact that the wife of a small Quaker farmer, illy educated, and, of course, without the tact which makes sympathy acceptable, could have been what Margaret Lyndsay said this woman had been to her in the last summer's trial. Anne was apt to distrust Mrs. Lyndsay's unwonted enthusiasms. Also, this invalid lady was very democratic in theory, but by nature's decree an aristocrat, whether she would or not. Thus, Anne Lyndsay was now a little on her guard, and more curious than she would have liked to have been thought.

But when, as Dorothy Maybrook advanced, a pair of large gray eyes came into the horizon of another pair almost as luminous, Anne, as she afterward explained, felt something akin to fascination. She made up her mind as Mrs. Maybrook approached that her facial expression was one of strange purity of repose. The next moment Miss Anne cast a foot over the hammock's edge, and made an effort to rise, in order to greet the new-comer. But to get out of a hammock with ease is not given to mortals to achieve without much practice, and as all rapid movements were sure to summon at once her unrelenting enemy, pain, she fell back with a low exclamation, wrung from her by pain so extreme that she was quite unprepared. Sudden anger stirred within her, because she had so plainly betrayed her feelings to one who had been described to her as full of sympathy and almost incredibly competent to notice the peculiari-

ties of men and things. If this woman should dare to pity her, in words or with looks!

"Good morning. Mrs. Maybrook, I am sure. I am Miss Lyndsay," said Miss Anne, in her most tranquil voice, and it was capable of many tones.

Said Dorothy to herself, "That woman is n't long for this world." What she said aloud was:

"Yes, I 'm Dorothy Maybrook. I brought over some wild strawberries for Mrs. Lyndsay. They 're very early, but there 's a sort of little nest right back of our clearing, and the sun gets in there constant,—seems as if it could n't ever get out,—and it hatches the berries two weeks before they 're done blooming anywhere else."

"Thank you," said Anne, who was making a difficult effort to catch with the foot outside of the hammock a slipper lost in the foiled attempt to rise.

Mrs. Maybrook set down the berries, and without a word went on her knees, took the dainty slipper, lifted the foot, bestowed a glance of swift curiosity upon it as she put on the slipper, and gently replaced the foot in the hammock.

"Sakes alive! If I was a man, I 'd just say it 's beautiful. Being a woman, I 'd like to know how you walk on them?"

"Oh, I don't very much; not nowadays," returned Anne, smiling. "Thank you."

It was a neat little shot, although quite unconscious of aim. Miss Anne tried to think she disliked both the help and the outspoken admiration. She made a feeble effort to generalize the compliment, and so to get away from its personal application:

"It 's a family failing, Mrs. Maybrook. Even our men have absurdly small hands and feet. I should have offered you a camp-chair. Get one, please, out of the house. I am quite incapable of helping any one,— even myself." Mrs. Maybrook did as Anne desired, and sat down.

"My sister-in-law was going to see you to-day. Shall I call her? She must be in her room."

"Oh, there 's time enough. That 's the only thing we have a plenty of up here. We ain't time-starved, I can tell you." Anne began to be interested. Quaintness of phrase was a thing so rare. For a few minutes she had been struggling with one of her few weaknesses. At last she gave way:

"Excuse me, but would you be so kind as to put the basket of strawberries in the house? The sun will spoil them."

"Oh, but the sun is good for them. They won't take any hurt."

"But I shall. The fact is, when I was a girl I was picking strawberries in the White Hills, and a snake — oh, a rattlesnake — struck at me. I have been ever since unable to endure the odor of strawberries. I think it becomes worse as I grow more feeble. It is very absurd." She was absolutely pleading her weakness to this simple woman, and had ceased for the time to be self-critical.

Mrs. Maybrook rose, and without more words, after carrying the basket to the cook's house, returned around the cabin to her seat facing Miss Anne. The smile she wore as she came back would usually have been taken by Anne for vulgar comment on her own

display of what might, with reason, have been taken for pure affectation. Now it struck Anne as being like her own habit of smiling large, or smiling small, as she said, at some humorous aspect of the passing hour.

"What amuses you?" she queried pleasantly.

"Oh, I was just a-thinking you might feel about those berries like Mrs. Eve might of felt when she was coming on in years and one of her grandchildren fetched her a nice, red apple. Guess he got warmed for it. Sandals might have come handy in big families, those days!"

Anne looked up, laughing gaily, and noting by the exception how rarely Mrs. Maybrook failed in her grammar.

"Delightful! Now I feel historically justified. Are there any snakes here?"

"Oh, no; none to hurt. But, bless me, I never can hear about snakes without thinking of Sairy Kitchins."

"And what was that?" said Miss Lyndsay, enjoying talk with a mind as fresh and unconventional as her guest's.

"Oh, it ain't much. You see, I 've had asthma so bad that Hiram and me, since the children are gone, we have traveled here and there, trying to find a place where I would n't have it."

"Have you suffered much?" said Anne.

"Yes,—quite my share. But there are worse things."

"That is so."

"Hiram and me get along most anywhere. We have a bit of money,—not overmuch. We are both pretty handy, and once we tried it two years down

they liked, and the cleverly built book-shelves Pierre had made were full to overflow.

Very soon Mrs. Lyndsay appeared, gave the visitor a more than usually warm welcome, and at last asked about the Colketts and the child.

"It died last night," said Mrs. Maybrook. "I was up there pretty early to-day. They 're awful hard folks to help any; it 's like setting up ten-pins, and down they go, in a minute. Hiram says they have n't any 'gitalongativeness.' That 's a great word with Hiram."

"Do they want help? What is there we can do?" said Mrs. Lyndsay.

"I would n't know to tell you. Oh, dear, if I was that man, I 'd drink, too."

"No! No!"

"Yes, I 'd drink! He did, some, yesterday; but I judge he 's taken none since Mr. Lyndsay was there. The fact is, Mrs. Lyndsay, Susan Colkett cared more for those children of hers than for her first man or Colkett, or anybody else, except herself. She 's just savage now, like a bear that has had its cubs taken away. And the worst of it is, she has n't got the means of wisdom in her, and never had, or else she 'd have seen you can't live in a pigsty and bring up live children. Oh! You were asking if they want anything?"

"Yes, Dorothy."

"Well, Mr. Carington he went over yesterday afternoon. I guess he took the short cut or he would have met Mr. Lyndsay coming out. Mr. Carington must be a pretty nice man. There 's not many as

young would give up Saturday afternoon fishing, even a bit of it, to go and see about a sick brat. Fishermen 's generally right selfish. He left them twenty dollars. But he had the high-up sense to give it to Susie. He 's a well set-up young man; I saw him poling a pirogue across. It takes a lot of judgment in a man's legs to handle a dugout."

"But you do it well, I fancy," said Anne.

"Yes, but I 'm a woman."

"Good," said Miss Lyndsay, and went out, leaving the others to talk alone.

Then Dorothy said, "What troubles that woman the most you could n't think, not if you lived as long as Noah."

"And what is it?"

"It 's because there won't be any tombstone. They 're all buried in the wood back of the cabin. Poor little kittens, just dead drownded in filth. She had better have thought more for them when they were alive."

"I will speak to Mr. Lyndsay about it."

"It would be just that much wasted."

"Money is well wasted sometimes. You might think of the box of ointment, Dorothy."

"It 's a long way between them two wastings."

"Perhaps. I don't know. We shall see."

"Well, I must go and cook Hiram's dinner. Good-by." And she went out and down to her dugout.

"What do you think of her, Anne?" said Mrs. Lyndsay, as the maiden lady came out of her own room.

"I think her most interesting, and altogether a remarkable person."

"A heart of gold!" said Mrs. Lyndsay. "You cannot imagine, Anne, what that woman was to me last summer."

"I can,—I think I can now." Mrs. Lyndsay went back to some household occupation, and Anne, returning to her hammock, lay thoughtfully watching the retreating pirogue and its capable guide, and smiling ever as was her habit.

Then she spoke aloud:

"That beats Marcus Aurelius. To have lost all her children, to have had sickness,—poverty, and not a wrinkle to record it all. That woman must have the self-contentment of a first-class angel. Ah, me!" And she turned again to the "Life of John, Lord Lawrence," and was soon smiling over it, for in her heroic lives found glad and ready recognition.

CHAPTER VI

THE light Gaspé canoe sped away up stream close to the shores, with Archibald Lyndsay and Rose. They were contentedly quiet for an hour or more, and at last left behind them the island camp and its white tents, and then the last of the clearings and the lower alluvial meadows with their richly feathered elms. As they went on, the hills were more abrupt and closer to the river, or precipitous past the power of the hardiest pines to find more than here and there a foothold.

And now Lyndsay laughed, and Rose, curious, inquired why.

"I was thinking of the boys"; and he told her of the hornets' nest.

"I don't think the dear mother will like it," said Rose.

"Perhaps,— oh, assuredly not; but what on earth can one do with three young steam-engines?"

"It 's very, very dreadful, papa, and do not tell; but I would like to be present at the siege of the hornets' nest. It must be awfully good fun."

"What was that you said?"

"I said awfully good fun. And also I desire to

add that this is my day, and I shall say what I please, do what I please, talk slang and bad grammar by the yard if I want to."

"As you like,—I make but one condition: there is to be none of that wading into deep waters of which you and Anne are so fond. I get enough of that at home, in my work. This is to be a tree-and-water day. I want to push on first up to the burnt lands. Some twenty years ago the upper country was burned off, so that, between the hills and the river are long abrupt slopes with low underbrush and millions of dead trees. The tops of the hills are also covered with the same mighty stubble."

"But that cannot be beautiful."

"No and yes. I fished above there one year, and for some days I found the desolation most oppressive. Then, one evening, I saw something in these gray dead trees, and ever since I have seen in them more and more that is strange or even beautiful."

"I think I have felt like that at times,—as if of a sudden I had become another person, and saw with strange eyes. Once we were looking at Ruysdael's pictures; it was at Amsterdam, and Aunt Anne said how delightful it would be just in a moment to see the world of things as a great master does, or the world of men as a poet may."

"What spirit made me his own I do not know, my dear," said Lyndsay; "but, if he fled, he left me some permanent property. There is a bit of St. Clair's verse which puts it fairly."

"And it is — Pardy?"

"I think I can repeat it, but I am never sure about my quotations:

'If from the vantage of thy wiser heart
I could look out on nature through thine eyes,
I think that I should learn a novel art,
And joyful capture some divine surprise.

The tiny morrow of the opening rose,
With kindred comment of thy genius viewed,
Might to love's wisdom eagerly disclose
The mystery of some new beatitude.'

Perhaps you will like my dead trees at first sight."

"I can hardly fancy that."

"Oh, you may. The afternoon is the time for the water. The black flies are pretty thick, Rose, eh?"

"They don't trouble me," she returned. "I can't say why. They bite, and that is all."

"I never could account for the exceptions," he said. "Ned is tormented by them, and they hardly touch Jack."

"How curious!"

"Yes. My own foes are the sand-flies, what are called by the Indians 'no-see-ums,' and in Pennsylvania pungies. I brought a little smudge-pot and a small A-tent, just to give you shelter at need." Meanwhile the poles rang ceaselessly, and the talk went on.

"I think, Pardy, the landscape under the water is almost as attractive as that above it. The stones seem to be all colors, and, I suppose, all shapes, because they play such queer tricks with the water. I never noticed until yesterday that when a wave

rolls over a large, smooth rock it takes perfectly the form of a shell,—I think I mean a scallop-shell."

"That is so, Rose. There, over there, is an example. I think it a very pretty idea,—one might be ingeniously poetical about it, but one won't."

By and by the stream stretched out shallow and broad, and the men took their paddles. Then they turned a sharp angle of the river and came among the burnt lands. Here and there a few great trees had strangely survived the fire, and towered high, green cones among the ruin.

"I can see no beauty in it," said Rose.

"I said it was strange, interesting, and had certain beauties. Wait a little. Land us on the island, Tom,—at the upper end. There will be more air. There is a good bit of grass and a spring near by."

Pretty soon the tent was up, and the smudge-pot, full of cedar bark, lighted. There was some wind, however, and the flies were not annoying.

"But what am I to sketch?"

"Let us sit in the opening of the tent. And now, my pipe. Let us first consider, Rosy, the eccentricities of these burnt trees. I want a sketch of some of them."

"Why are they not black? I see very few that are charred."

"Ask Tom,—it will amuse you." She did so.

"Them trees, when there 's a fire, and there ain't too many pines and firs, the fire it just eats up their leaves and scorches their hides."

"Bark?"

"Yes; and the winds and the frost and the sun,

they peels off the dead hides. After that them trees lasts powerful long. But if the bark be on, they rots."

"What I want just now, Rose, is to get you to look at those few isolated skeletons of dead trees on the point. There are many as odd in the wood-tangle below, but these above you can more readily sketch for me, because they stand by themselves. We will come back to the rest by and by."

"Oh, my dear, dear M. A., what a fine master you are! I used to long for you, and that book we were to write, on the 'Art of Seeing.'"

"Yes, I have taught myself to see. While you are sketching I will lecture a little."

"And just what do you wish me to draw?"

"Take your field-glass and look at the trees on the point. Now, the one at the edge,—look at it; I do not want to tell you about it, I want you to see."

"Well," said Rose, talking as she sat in the tent-shadow, the glass at her eyes, "I see a tall dead tree,—a fir? No, a dead spruce,—probably a spruce, I am not sure. It is gray, and has only two great limbs left, and a tuft of dead twigs above—and—the trunk is oddly twisted to the left."

"Now you are getting warm, as the children say. Hey, Rose?"

"I see," she cried, with a real joy in her mind; and, taking her pencil, swiftly drew the desolate dead thing, while Lyndsay looked on.

"Good!" he said; "very good. You have it precisely. I will make a word-sketch, and we will compare work. I can't draw a straight line, as you know.

I conceive of the other world, not entirely as a place to develop our own qualities, but where there will be a pleasant interchange of capacities. There, my dear, I shall sing like Nilsson and paint like Velasquez."

"I think I could myself make some pleasant exchanges," said Rose. "Those stiff lines of the dead branchless firs and pines, set against that dark cloud,—they remind me of the lances in that great picture by Velasquez at Madrid,—the Surrender of Breda. I loved the two men in that picture. Requesens is taking the keys of the town from Don John of Nassau, and he is just saying, 'Might have happened to any fellow,—so sorry for you!' You know, papa?"

"No, I do not. But I recall Macbeth's etching of the picture. Go on with your sketch. Mine will be done in a few minutes."

Then he wrote in his note-book again, glancing now and then at the tree.

"Listen, Rose. How is this? 'Tree sketch: dead tree; no bark; cool gray all over; stands alone on point of land. Trunk twisted; only two limbs; bunched end-twigs. Limbs raised like arms.' Now, if—mind, if it says to you—I mean if it has for you a distinct expression—I hate affectation here and everywhere: but if this distorted thing really expresses for you—something—label it!"

Rose was still a moment, and then said, "It is rooted there, still, alone. It seems to be turning back toward its fellows. It suggests to me utter dreariness. What have you found to say about it, Pardy?"

"See, dear, I have written, as I often do at the end of a word-sketch: 'Loneliness, suffering; isolated anguish, if you like.'"

"I see. How very, very interesting! It seems to remember the fire, father." It was sometimes this, and sometimes Pardy, or Marcus Aurelius, or any queer pet-name of nursery origin.

"You begin to see what one may get out of a dead tree?"

"Yes. There is another, below,—just below."

"Yes; I sketched it last year. Here it is: 'Dead tree; poplar; split by lightning; black and gray. The lower half thrown out like a leg. Above, one limb has fallen against the trunk; top of tree tufted and thrown back. Queer expression of jollity.' Sketch it, dear.

"How ready you are!" he said, over her shoulder. "Look at the one farther away,—bent back with two great limbs high in air. It is prayer, deprecation—dread: I am not sure,—and again, before you draw it, look across to the other side. This is my sketch. 'Late twilight; a huge, gray rock in the water. Deep cleft in it; out of this rises a dead pine. It leans toward me. Two vast limbs extended right and left. Top tufted as usual, and bent to one side. All set against a bleak mass of boulders.'"

"I see, even in this light; but at dusk! at dusk it must be terrible,—a crucifixion!"

"Yes, that is it. It recalls to me an odd thing. A few years ago I was fishing as late as ten o'clock at night on the Metapedia, and, looking up, saw on the hill above me a cross set against the blood-red,

newly risen moon. Next morning I perceived that it was only a telegraph-pole with its cross-bar."

"What a theme for Heine!" said Rose.

"Yes, indeed. Now sketch me this, and the other trees. I want only just mere hints of form. There are no end of strange things among dead trees. I could not exhaust them in hours of description. There was last year a fallen tree on an island near our camp. I suppose the mass of stuff sent down by freshets protected it below, and the ice and so on swept away the branches which lay uppermost. At last the wreckage was washed off. When I came on it at evening it looked like one of those prehistoric lizards Dicky delights in. There were many legs on each side as it lay and—"

"Do let me see, Pardy. You drew it?" and she laughed. "I don't think it would go into the *Salon*. There ought to be a place for embryo art like this."

"Like 'Rejected Addresses'?"

"Yes; the real ones."

"Do you frame yours, Rose?"

"Oh, for shame!"

"Who rose to that fly?"

"But you coldly planned it. It was base."

"Poor thing!" he laughed—

> "The wail of the salmon
> A man tried to gammon.

Alas, poor Rose!"

"Wait a bit. As Jack says, 'That drawing is unique.'"

"I am quite proud of it. I wanted to give you the

lesson. Now I will smoke and talk and take mine ease, while you draw."

"I can talk and sketch, too."

"No doubt. On the Nipigon River there is a long carry once burned over. After the fire must have come a windfall. The whole blasted forest went down before it. It lies to-day a grim tangle of gray or black trunks, with huge agonized arms extended upward. At dusk it is very striking. Years went by, and then I saw the dead Confederates lying below Round Top the day after the fight, with arms and legs in rigid extension,— a most horrible memory. As I looked, it recalled that wrecked forest."

"How dreadful, Pardy! I think I could draw those trees as you describe them. I will try to-morrow."

Meanwhile, as she sketched, he went on:

"The growth of power to see is a curiously interesting thing. There is a disease or disorder called 'mind-blindness,' about which the doctor was telling me a few weeks ago. People who have it see things only as a mirror sees, and cannot give them names; but if they touch or handle them, are able to say what they are, or to tell their uses. Think, now, of a baby. It merely sees things as a mirror sees. Later, it learns the qualities of things seen, remembers them, learns to group them, and so to say at last what the thing is, or is for. Some people seem to stop in their education a little way beyond their baby gains, and at least never learn to get out of mere observation any pleasure."

"But one may make many uses of this power to see. Now, the poets —"

"Stop a moment. The poets get an absurd amount of credit for being able to see as other men do not; but, really, the pleasantest people for a woodland walk are those naturalists who see far more than the poet, and combine with their science, or have with it, the love of things for the mere beauty in them. I never did walk with a poet in a wood. I think I should see all he saw."

"But not the same way."

"I would dispute that, if you mean to say I get less pleasure, Rose. And there is some nonsense in the notion that poets are very close observers of nature. They vary, of course. Take Wordsworth, he was a mere child in minute observation compared to Shakspere. Tennyson is better, too,—oh, by far; and any clever naturalist sees far more than any one of them."

"And now, I know, Pardy, you are going to advise me to read Ruskin, because that is the way you always used to wind up our talks."

"I was, dear."

"I must try him again. Aunt Anne says we grow up to the stature of certain books as we get older, and at last can look them in the eyes and say, 'We understand one another.' As to what you say of Wordsworth, I shall ask her what she thinks."

"We shall not differ," said Lyndsay. "I see you have done your sketch. Let us have lunch. Afterward, if there is time, we can take a look at these trees when the evening shadows are falling. We have by no means done with them."

Meanwhile Tom and his bowman had made the fire. The salmon was deliciously broiled, for these wood-

men are nearly all good cooks; the potatoes roasted in the hot ashes; the bacon, broiled with the salmon, in thin slices, brown and crisp. Rose thought there could be no meal like this. It was set out on a flat rock, with birch-bark for plates. The spring was a little way back of them.

"Let us go for the water ourselves," said Lyndsay.

They walked down the island a hundred yards, and there, in deep woods, found two rocks fallen together, and under them a pretty little rise of water, bubbling up out of the earth.

"That is really a spring," said Rose. "One uses words until one forgets to think of their meaning. How cold it is!"

"Yes 38°,— and delicious." He twisted a bit of red birch-bark into a cup, and put a split twig at each end to keep it together. Then he filled it, and she drank, throwing her hair back with one hand, and flashing laughter over the brim of the cup from eyes the color of which has never been rightly settled to this day.

"More lunch, Rose?"

"A little jam and a biscuit."

Archibald Lyndsay lit a pipe and lay upon his back on the meager grasses, with hands clasped behind his head. His eyes wandered from the clouds overhead to Rose, and thence to wood or stream.

"The court has dined, M. A.," she said. "What now?"

"I am afraid," he returned, "it is too late for you to sketch in colors the trees, or even a bit of them. I wanted to get your notion of the tints; but look at this — I am not quite sure I myself see colors at their

true values. There is no standard in which to try our sense of color. I am sure some men see a tint bright, and some see it darker, and then some artists are sensational in their statement of colors on canvas."

"I should like to try."

"We are a little too late; but the sun is back of us yet. That is essential. Now, keep in shadow, and tell me the color of those sun-lit myriads of dead pine and fir and spruce and poplar."

"How they shine!"

"Yes; they are very hard, and polished by storm and sun. They are about a hundred yards distant. Near by they are silvery-gray. At their feet is a mass of young birch and beech, and feathered ferns below, along the margin."

"They are purple,—clear, distinct purple," said Rose. "Of course, they are purple."

"Yes. Now look at the river." All between the two observers and the trees was a swift flow of hastening water, faintly fretted all over by the underlying brown and gray and white stones of the bottom,— a tremulous brown mirror.

"Oh, the beautiful things!" cried Rose. "Purple reflections,— deeper purple than the trees. How they wriggle!"

"Put me the two purples on paper."

"There!" she said, "that is as I see them."

"And I," he returned,—"for me they should be a much deeper, purer tint. That is the difference between your color sense and mine."

"Is it true, Pardy, that there may be colors no man has seen?"

"Yes."

"And sounds no man has heard?"

"Yes."

"'Heard sounds are sweet, but sounds unheard are sweeter.'"

"Your quotation sets one's imagination free to rove. Think of extending the gamut of human thought. I cannot imagine that; and, as to your poet, he did not mean, I suppose, the sounds man never heard are sweeter; but then one has his freedom of interpreting the words of genius. They always build better than they know."

"Aunt Anne says that is so beautifully illustrated by the view a man of science would take to-day of St. Paul's words: 'The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee.'"

"The point is well taken, as we lawyers say. But that must do for to-day. Come, Tom, you and Bill can smoke your pipes in the middle of the skiff. Put Miss Rose in the bow, I will take the stern."

"And am I to paddle? What fun!"

"Yes. In with you." And the boat fled away down the swift waters, with here and there, where the billows rolled high over a deeply hidden rock, a wild roller which swept them on as with the rush of a bird through space, while Rose laughed out the joy of a great delight, for of all modes of motion this is the most satisfying.

"It is n't difficult," she said.

"No, and it is a noble exercise. Look! Look, Rose! See that hawk,— no, it is an eagle. Don't you envy him? What are those lines Anne loves to quote about

the hawk and the lark? They are called 'True Captivity.'"

"I forget all but the last two lines. It contrasts the two prisoners, and says of the lark:

> 'He has the heaven which he sings,
> But my poor hawk has only wings.'"

"Thank you. There used to be an imprisoned hawk in a cage at the lower clearing. The melancholy of his great yellow eyes so troubled me that I bought him, and, to Churchman's amazement, opened his cage. The poor old warrior walked out, looked around him, and then walked back again into voluntary captivity."

"Like the man of the Bastille."

"Yes. I shut the cage and took it down to the river. There I left it, open. Next day I saw him perched above it on a dead tamarack, swinging in a wild wind. The day after he was gone."

"I wonder if he regrets the cage and the certainty of full diet."

"Ah! liberty is very sweet. I sometimes wonder whether, when this earthly cage is opened, we shall linger about it like my hawk."

For a time they speed onward, silent, as the shadows grew across the waters. Said Lyndsay, at length: "One more thing to note: the sun is down, but see how that huge array of gleaming, seried tree-trunks, away up on the hilltops, takes the light we have lost."

Rose looked, and saw on the far summits that the multitudinous tree-stems were of a lovely lemon yel-

low, and below, where their lines crossed at the intercepting angles of two slopes, of a pallid lilac.

"I think we have learned to use our eyes to-day. No need to paddle here. Take a rest. We are going at the rate of five miles an hour."

In the gathering dusk they flitted past the campfires on the island, and soon were at their cabin door.

"Shall I ever have another day like this?" said Rose, as she ran up the steps. "Thank you, Pardy."

"I don't know," replied Ned, coloring as usual. "I would want a lot of them."

"There is something in that," said Anne. "I never found any one human being who, at all times and under all stress of needs, was able to give me everything I want of man or woman."

"I think with you, Anne," returned Lyndsay. "I never could quite comprehend those all-satisfying alliances one reads about, those friend-love affairs, such as Shakspere had with Herbert, or whoever it was. Certainly some men, and not always those who have most to give, intellectually, at least, have, as was said of a dead friend of mine, a genius for friendship. Wherever he went, men became attached to him,— they could hardly say why."

"How do you explain it?" said Rose.

"He was quick of temper, cultivated, but not a profound man,— unselfish. I think it must have been chiefly because he took a large and unfailing interest in other men's pursuits, and was not troubled if they made no return in kind. He gave interest and affection, being easily pleased, and exacted no return. But it always came."

"I should have said he had a talent for friendship. Genius is a large word," said Anne.

"Yes; it was only an unusual capacity,— not genius."

"But what is genius?" said Rose.

"You are getting out of my depth!" cried Mrs. Lyndsay, laughing. "I shall want a life-preserver pretty soon, Archie."

"I can only quote Marcus Aurelius," said Lyndsay.

"He remarks — what is it he says about genius, Anne?"

"No, no. We want something fresh, Pardy."

"A fine way to clap an extinguisher on wisdom."

"But I want — I do want an answer."

"Shall we say that genius is crude creative power? How will that do?"

"That is better than usual, Aurelius," cried Anne. "It needs talent to come to anything. It would be easy to illustrate. There is Blake at one end, and — well — Shakspere at the other."

"May we go?" said Jack, yawning fearfully.

"Yes, of course. What a sight you are!"

"They must have been good shots."

"Oh, they did well," said Ned, "and it was worse than bullets. They don't get inside your pantaloons and skirmish around. I'm very uncomfortable when I sit down."

"How can one die better, etc.?" cried Dick, and, riotously laughing, they ran out of doors. Margaret looked after them affectionately.

"Do you remember, Archie, how you used to have an unending tale for those boys when they were little, of Tommy Turnip, and how he ran away, and went to Russia, and was made Count Turnipsky?"

"I do, indeed, my dear. It went on for years. Come, Rose, I sha'n't rest until you have killed a salmon. If it rains hard all day the water will rise, and then good-by salmon until it begins to fall."

"Is that so?"

"Yes. The salmon is a mysterious creature. We know little about him; but we do know that with

rising water, or rapidly rising warmth of water, he seems to lose curiosity as to flies. Come along."

'I think my own curiosity collapses in hot weather," said Anne.

There was now a steady fall of rain, but, well protected, they reached the pool.

"How black the water is!" said Rose. Tom sat quiet without the least cover, and took the ducking as if it were a matter of course. Now he adjusted a rather large Jock Scott. Then Rose began to cast, while Lyndsay sat behind her and smoked.

"Could n't I stand?" she said.

"Yes. You will cast better, and take care you don't catch the handle of the reel in your wraps. Give the back cast a little more time. Count one, two, three quickly. You do very well. You will soon get the trick of it."

"You riz him!" roared Tom, for there was a mighty swash, and half a salmon came into view.

"Sit down. Wait a little."

"*Will* he—*do* you think he will rise again?"

"If I knew, dear, it would save much needless casting. Will a young man propose twice, thrice? Who can say?"

"I fail, sir, to perceive the analogy."

"My dear Rose, the too logical mind is destructive of the very foundations of social gaiety. Young man rises to a fly; salmon rises to a fly."

"But no right-minded woman casts a fly over. Oh, they just—you know."

"No, I don't. Both the fish and the man have the right of choice; but there is some responsibility as

to the attractiveness of a Jock Scott, or a Durham fanger. So, after all, the young man's anguish may be the fault of the wicked milliner. As a question of morals one likes to know."

"But will he—will he come back?"

"Really, Rose, that was worthy of Sarah Siddons. It might have been said of the most attractive of my sex."

"Bother the men, papa; I want *my* fish. What is a man to a salmon!"

"I recognize that assertion of personal ownership as distinctively feminine."

"You are too bad. How it pours!"

"Try him again. Cast out to right, and let the fly come down, around the tail of the boat, with not too much movement, just as if you were quite indifferent; an ordinary, every-day promenade, my dear. The application is, you see, of skill acquired in one branch of industry to the cultivation of another."

Of a sudden the reel ran out a little.

"Poor young man! Sit down. Keep the tip up, so."

The fly had been tranquilly taken under water, this time with no show of indecision. Rose obeyed the advice, and for a moment sat expectant, the rod well bent. The delay on the part of the salmon was so great that she could not understand it.

"It must be fast on something. It does n't move."

"No, the young man is n't quite sure as to what is the matter. He is reflecting. Are Cupid's arrows barbed, my dear? There!"

"Oh!"—for the reel ran out so fast as to make a distinct musical note, and, in a moment, Rose saw

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the salmon flash high in the air near the farther bank.

"That can't be my young man."

"Yes. Reel, reel quick."

Meanwhile it was up anchor and away, the instant the fish struck. The men shared Rose's excitement, and watched the quick movements of the fish with admirable understanding of when to wait or to follow. The rapid reeling in Rose found hard work.

"I do think you must take the rod," she said.

"No," he cried, laughing. "I prefer not to have the responsibility of other folks' flirtations. He won't carry on this way very long."

But again he was off, and this time not so far. Then he leaped twice, with mighty splashings of the water. Meanwhile Tom was carefully getting his canoe out of the heavy current, and Rose found that the salmon was slowly yielding to the steady strain of the rod. They were now near the bank, and in an eddy.

"Look sharp, Rose," said Mr. Lyndsay. "Give him the butt."

"What?"

"Yes. Keep the tip back and the butt forward. As the fish yields reel in a little, dropping the tip. That 's right. Now, you can lift him, as it were, by throwing the butt forward again, so. Reel! reel! Well handled."

"He 's a-comin'," said Tom. "He are a buster."

She could but just perceive her fish,— a dark, shadowy thing,— a few feet away. Now he sees the man with his gaff, and is off on a short run; and again is slowly reeled in.

"Something must break," said Rose.

"No, you can't pull more than two pounds, my dear, do as you may. It seems to you a vast strain. There, keep his head up-stream. Well done. Let him drop back a little."

As he spoke, Tom made a quick movement and gaffed his fish. In a moment it was in the boat, and Rose sank back delighted.

"Here is the scale, Tom."

Tom held up the fish, with the scale-hook in the gill-cover.

"Thir — ty — two — pounds, miss."

"Do let me see," she said, and examined her captive with curiosity.

"A fine young man, by the neb of his lower jaw," said her father. "You don't like the gaffing: I saw that. Be assured that lingering hours of slow exhaustion in the nets at the mouth of the river are far worse. You could let the fish go; you could refrain from fishing; you need not eat salmon; several ways are open to the sensitive."

"I am very foolish, I dare say."

"There is some folly that is nearer heaven than some wisdom, my child. If this folly is incapable of reasoning defense, it is still not one to be ashamed of. We may over-cultivate our sensibilities so as, at last, to become Brahminical in our abhorrence of any destruction of life. The argument as to need for animal flesh is hardly a help. Men, in fact, nations, live without it; and it is quite possible that we have in time more or less manufactured both the appetite and the need for this diet. Our nearest anatomical kins-

men, the monkeys, are all vegetarians, and as for any necessity to kill salmon or deer, there is nowadays none. Both are mere luxuries of the rich. Not a soul on these rivers ever gets a salmon, unless he poaches or we give it to him."

"Is n't that hard?"

"Yes and no. Throw it all open, and in five years there would be no salmon. They would go as the buffalo have gone."

"And still I am sorry for the people who cannot fish; the eating is another matter."

"Their fishing, dear, would be the mere use of a net. But there is another point of view. We leave more money on these rivers, are of more real use to these boatmen and farmers, than all the salmon they might take could possibly be."

"How difficult all life seems! There are so many questions."

"Fish, my dear, in peace of soul. By Thor, you have a grilse!" he cried. For now she was fast to a fish of some six pounds, which was in and out of water every minute, and, being too small to gaff, was beached by a quick run up a sandy shore of the well-drenched fisherwoman. While Tom was weighing the fish, Rose learned that a grilse was a young salmon, and what a parr was, and a smolt, and a kelt, and how a grilse was known by the forked tail and the small scales.

"A good un to smoke," said Tom. "We split 'em, miss, and salt 'em pretty well, and then hold 'em open like with two sticks, and hangs 'em over a right smoky fire for a matter of four or five days. Some

makes a wigwam of bark and smokes 'em in that, but it ain't needed unless you want 'em to keep long. Them they sells is all dried stiff and hard. These here, just dried gentle, why they 're as fine-flavored as — as — angels, or a chicken porkenpine."

"A smoked angel!" laughed Rose. "I am horribly wet, but I must kill another salmon." Her hope was realized, and, after an hour of hard casting, a twenty-pound fish was brought to gaff in some twelve minutes.

"Very good time, Rosy. I used to think no man ought to be over a half-hour in killing the strongest salmon. But the charm of the game lies in the amazing individuality of the fish. No one of them ever does just what any other does. Once I was two hours with a salmon, and you may have the like luck."

"I should perish of fatigue."

"What would you think of killing ninety-two and six grilse in five days? I once killed forty-two striped bass in twenty-four hours, but these are bonanzas. Run the boat up and empty her," he added to Tom. As they stood, the rain continued falling more and more heavily through a perfectly still atmosphere.

"Kind of falls," said Tom.

"Did it ever rain harder?" said Rose.

"Yes, miss; there are a spot up nigh back of Thunder Bay — that 's to north of Lake Superior — and there it do rain in July — solid."

"Solid?" said Lyndsay.

"I said solid. Folks moves out for a month, otherwise they is drownded standin'."

"That is a trapper's tale, Rose. I have heard it before."

"It is near enough here to being solid to enable me to believe the rest. How the boughs leap every now and then as they drop their loads of rain, and how slate-blue and opaque the water is!"

"Notice these great drops: each rebounds from the surface in a little column, so as to seem like black spikes in the water. See, too, how the circles they make cross one another without breaking. Smoke rings do that," and he blew successive circlets of his pipe-smoke, as he spoke, so that they passed across one another, breaking and remaking their rolling rings.

"Why is that?" she said.

"I do not know. I hardly care to ask. I am in the mood of mere acceptance. Oh, there is the sun, Rose! See how between the finger-like needles of the pine the drops are held, and what splendid jewelry the sun is making. It needs a still hour for this. You have seen a thing in its perfection quite rare."

"Must we go, Pardy? It has done raining."

"Yes, we must go. I forgot to ask you to listen to the different noises a heavy rain makes according as you stand under pine or spruce, or hear it patter on the flat-lying, deciduous leaves, or hum on the water. Come, you must take the twenty-pounder to Dorothy Maybrook. If it is not too wet, she will perhaps walk up to Colkett's with you. But don't go into the cabin. You might take for those poor people two or three cans of corned beef. Meats are scarce luxuries with them. They will need no money

just at present. Mr. Carington gave them some help."

"Did he?"

"Yes. The child is to be buried to-morrow, I hear."

"Is Mr. Carington the young man who shot the seal?"

"I suppose so,—yes. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing. Idlest curiosity. Pure curiosity unstained by the coarseness of a motive."

"I am answered," he said, laughing.

They were soon at home.

CHAPTER VIII

AFTER Rose and her father had made their brief toilets, they found the family at luncheon.

"I was wet to the skin, and through it, I believe," said Rose. "No, I sha'n't take cold, mama. Nobody takes cold here. Tom must be wet through to his bones — absolutely water-logged."

"The boys were a-drip like water-rats," said Mrs. Lyndsay. "I am sure some of you will have pneumonia."

"But I got an eighteen-and-a-half-pound salmon," cried Jack.

"He 's had him in his lap for an hour, like a baby," said Dick.

"That is capable of olfactory demonstration," remarked Anne.

"He 'll get that salmon framed," cried Dick. "Such a fuss —"

"Did you get any, sir?" asked his father.

"No."

"Are you sorry Jack did?"

"No, I am not that mean," returned the boy, flushing. "Ned he caught it, and he let Jack bring it in. Jack wanted it so very bad."

"Badly, sir?"

"Badly."

"And it was Ned's fish, after all."

As he spoke, Lyndsay nodded gently, smiling at the youngest son, and no more was said; but the boys understood well enough that neither the selfishness nor the self-denial had gone unnoticed. This was made more plain when Mr. Lyndsay said:

"I shall fish the upper pool to-morrow morning — or, rather, you may, Ned, for I have letters to write."

"And Jack and Dick?" said Ned.

"Those other fellows may slay trout." He disliked even the approach to tale-telling by his boys, and when Mrs. Lyndsay made an appeal, in her mild way, he said, laughing:

"The laws of the Medes and Persians were never changed. Let it rest there. My barbarians understand me, I fancy."

There was a little silence, which Rose broke.

"What is that in the glass, Dick, on the window-ledge?"

"What Pierre calls a lamprey. It is the very lowest of vertebrates. It has only a cartilaginous skeleton."

"Must be an awful learned beast," said Ned.

"It holds on to the side of the salmon, Rosy."

"Just like a fellow outside of an omnibus," said Dick.

"What a queer thing!" and Rose got up to look at it. "I wonder if the salmon likes it. A parasite!"

"Which proves," laughed Anne, "that even a parasite is capable of attachment. The obligation is all on one side."

"Literally," said Lyndsay.

"Archie, you are worse than Mr. B.," said Anne. "If you say anything clever, he begins to dissect it for the benefit of all concerned. The application of anatomy to humor is one of the lowest of social pursuits. I loathe that man."

"You don't really loathe any one, aunty."

"If you do not," said Margaret, "it is a pity to say that sort of thing."

"But I do loathe the man—I do; I do. I am honest. He has every quality of what Dick tenderly calls a G. I. P., except the probability of ultimate usefulness."

"Reasonably complete that," said Lyndsay, while Jack grinned his appreciation.

"He is a clergyman, Anne," remarked Margaret, with emphasis.

"That only makes it worse. I have heard him preach. Don't you think a man who has no humor must be a bad man?"

"Anne!"

"One moment, dear. Let me finish him. I was going to say, Archie, that if a mule was to kick that man just for fun, he would never know he was kicked."

"That covers the ground. You should have edited a newspaper, Anne. Such vituperative qualities are wasted here."

"Indeed, I think so," said Mrs. Lyndsay, rising at the end of her luncheon. "It may amuse you, Archie, but for the boys it is bad, dear, bad."

Upon this the twins, enchanted to hear of wickedness, became critically attentive to the matter, and for

a moment refrained from their diet. Anne, a little vexed, smiled as her sister-in law stood opposite, but made no other reply.

"I dare say it amuses you, my dear Anne."

"It does."

"But should it, dear, and at the cost of temptation to others? Go out, boys." The twins went forth merry. "And — and, dear, don't you think —?"

Between question and answer Lyndsay made swift retreat, with an explanatory cigar-case in his hand.

"Yes, I think, Margaret"; and then, the gray eyes lighting up, "I think, Margaret, that you do not always think. If you did, you would criticize that wicked Archie."

"Archie! Archie! What do you mean?"

"I admit your premise. Homicide applied to character is bad enough; but don't you think that Archie ought to give up killing salmon?"

"What?"

"You see it teaches the boys to be cruel. It is the sad beginning of murder. There is only a difference of degree in it. Suppose, now, a man kills a monkey, and then — you follow me, dear — and then — oh, do come here, Rose — and then he gets a shot somewhere in Africa at the missing link. You see where killing salmon lands you at last. Where shall we draw the line?"

Rose laughed, despite her mother's face of puzzled yet obstinate gravity.

"What do you mean, Anne?"

Anne rarely argued seriously with this sister-in-law, who, despite their differences, was very dear to her.

Her delight was, like the cuttle-fish, so to obscure the whole atmosphere of a discussion with mistiness of vague analogy as to enable her to retreat with honor.

"Good gracious!" Margaret went on, fanning herself violently, as she did in all weather, and amusedly indicating by her use of the fan her own moods, "what did I say to bring out all this nonsense? I think I — yes — what was it, Rose?"

Any one's irritation, of which she herself seemed to be the cause, troubled the little lady, especially if Anne were the person involved. Nevertheless, no experience sufficed quite to keep Mrs. Lyndsay out of these risks when her motherly instincts were in action.

Rose smiled, as she replied:

"Dear little mother, Aunt Anne objects to your criticism of her form of sport, and the naughty aunty is raising a dust of words, in which she will scuttle away." As she spoke she cast a loving arm around her mother, and one on her aunt's thin shoulders. But Margaret Lyndsay had the persistency of all instinctive beings.

"I think it bad for the boys. I always shall think it bad. Dick is now too fond of ridiculing serious things, and they think whatever you do is right, and whatever you say they think delightful. As for Ned—"

"Ned! my Ned! That boy is an angel. I won't have a word—"

"As if I did not know it!" said Margaret, with the nearest approach to wrath of which she was capable. "Really, Anne Lyndsay, may I not even praise my own boys?"

"I think, my dear Margaret, you lack imagination," said Anne. Like a great algebraist, who is apt to skip in his statements a long series of equations, she was given to omitting the logical steps by which her swift reason passed to a conclusion satisfactorily true for her, but obscure enough to her hearers.

"I don't understand," said Mrs. Lyndsay.

"Nor I," echoed Rose.

"My dears," said Anne, smiling, "the prosperity of life lies largely in the true use of imagination."

"You are incorrigible, Anne. But I know I am right."

"Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one, are ofttimes different," quoted Anne, rising, and not over well pleased. "I think I shall go and lie down."

"I think I would," said Mrs. Lyndsay, simply. "You are not looking well to-day."

"I am well enough," said Miss Anne.

"All ready! — and the fish and Polycarp!" cried Lyndsay.

Rose was soon in the canoe, and the men began poling across the river. As they moved, she sat, reflecting upon the little scene she had witnessed. It troubled her that two people so dear to her should not always understand each other. The mother had already ceased to think of it, and the aunt's irritability was a matter of minutes. Only Anne Lyndsay knew how sternly a remarkable intellect had by degrees dictated terms of reasonable life to a quick temper and a tongue too perilously skilful. This endless warfare was now rarely visible, but its difficulties were terribly increased at times when weakness and

pain grew hard to endure and fought on the side of her foes. There were, indeed, times during the weariness of travel when Rose Lyndsay was startled by what she saw; times when Anne was striving with constantly increasing pain. Then it would end with a laugh and a jest, and some quaint defense of pain as a form of moral education, until Rose, despite herself, would be reassured, and she

> Who would have given a caliph's gold
> For consolation, was herself consoled.

These things troubled her as she crossed the stream. Once ashore she ceased to think of them. Polycarp, with few words, slung the salmon on his back, and, leaving Ambrose to pious meditations and the canoe, indicated the ox-road to Rose, who went on in front.

After twenty minutes of swift walking, Rose came out of the wood-path into a clearing of some fifty acres, and at last to a cabin set in an inclosure. Here were a few beds of the commoner flowers and a squared-log house. The windows were open, the clean white muslin curtains pulled back, and on the ledges tomato-cans and a broken jug or two filled with that flower which grows best for the poor, the red geranium. On the south end of the cabin a Japanese ivy, given by Mrs. Lyndsay, had made a fair fight with the rigor of a Canadian winter and was part way up to the gable. Noticing the absence of dirt and of the litter of chips, rags, egg-shells, and bits of paper, so common where labor has all it can do to attend to the essential, Rose tapped on the open door, and then, turning, saw Mrs.

Maybrook standing at the well. She came forward at once to meet her visitor.

"Why, I guess you must be Margaret Lyndsay's daughter."

Rose, a little taken aback by the familiar manner of this identification, perhaps showed it to this shrewd observer in something about her bearing as she said, "A pleasant evening after the rain," and took the proffered hand. "Yes, I am Rose Lyndsay."

"I 'm never quite rid of my Quaker fashion of naming folks without their handles. Seems to get you nearer to people. Now, don't you think so? Come in."

Rose, as her host stepped aside, entered the cabin. It was bedroom, kitchen, and sitting-room all in one, like most of these rude homes, but it was absolutely clean, and just now, as the cooking was done out of doors, was cool and airy. Mrs. Maybrook was in a much-mended gown, and bore signs enough of contact with pots and pans. Still the great coils of hair were fairly neat, and the gray eyes shone clear and smiling. She made none of the apologies for her house or its furniture such as the poor are apt to make, nor yet for herself or her dress.

"Come in and sit down. I 'm that glad to see you. Oh, Polycarp, is that you? And your father has sent me a salmon? My old man will like that. Put it in the brook, Polycarp."

"But it is my fish," said Rose. "I killed it and I wanted you to have it; my father had nothing to do with it. I am glad of a chance to thank you, Mrs. Maybrook, for — for all you were to my mother — all you did last summer when our dear Harry died."

And this fine young woman, in her tailor-made London walking-gown, thereupon having got to the end of words, and having had this thing in mind for ten minutes, fell an easy victim to nature, so that her eyes filled as she spoke. When this came about, Dorothy became as easy a prey to the despotism of sympathetic emotion, and her tears, too, fell like ripe apples on a windy November day. Also, upon this, these two "fools of nature" looked at each other and smiled through their tears, which is a mysteriously explanatory and apologetic habit among rightly made women. After this they were in a way friends. The elder woman took the hand of the younger and said:

"When my last boy died, there was a woman I just hated, and she came and she cried. It makes a heap of matter who cries,—don't it, now?"

"Oh, it does—it does," said Rose, with still a little sob in her voice.

"I did n't want that woman to cry. But you don't mind *my* crying, now, do you? That was the sweetest little fellow."

"Please don't," said Rose.

"No, no; I won't, I know. Is n't it awful lucky men can't cry? That 's just the only way we can get even with 'em How 's mother? And Miss Anne? Now, that is a woman. Never saw a woman like her in all my born life. Ain't she got a way of saying things? Oh, here 's Hiram. Hiram, this is Miss Rose Lyndsay. I reckon"—Mrs. Maybrook reckoned, calculated, or guessed with the entire indifference of a woman who had lived south, north, and east—"I reckon they knew what they was about when they

called you Rose. 'T ain't easy naming children. They ain't all like flowers, that just grow up, according to their kind. If you 'd have been called Becky, there would n't have been no kind of reason in it."

"I trust not," laughed Rose.

"How do you do, miss?" said Hiram. He was tall, a little bent, clad in sober gray, and had a shock of stiff, grizzly hair and a full gray beard. His eyes, which were pale blue and meaningless, wandered as he stood.

"Miss Rose has fetched a fish," said Dorothy. "You might clean it, Hiram."

"I 'll do it," he said, stolidly, and turned to go like a dull boy sent on an errand.

"And don't forget to fetch the cows in at sundown."

"I 'll do it," and he went out.

"He 's a bit touched in his head," said his wife. "You see, when we were at Marysville the war kind o' upset him. They wanted him to go into the rebel army, and he was n't minded to do it. I got him a place on a railroad, so he did n't have to; but he was awful worried, and took to thinking about it, and his brothers that were in our army,—on the other side,—and then he got off his head. He ain't been the same man since,—and twice he ran away. But I fetched him both times, and then the fevers took the children. He ain't been the same man since. I 've got to p'int him a good bit,—that 's what he calls it; but if he 's p'inted right, he goes sure. To my thinking, it is a queer world, Miss Rose. I wish I was certain there is a better."

"But there is," said Rose.

"Well, well. Maybe. Anyhow, I never felt no call to doubt what I was to do in this one. Old Kitchins used to pray over me. He was an awful certain man about other folks' sins; never missed fire. At last, one day, when he was a-consoling me, and thinking he 'd just only got to be a kind of centurion for a woman's troubles, and say go and they 'd go, I asked him if he 'd any knowledge of the gospel of grinning,—and that ended him. Come out and see my flowers."

Rose got up, laughing. "I want you to walk to Colkett's with me. I told the men to go up the river, so as to bring us back. You see, I made sure you would go."

"Go! — of course I 'll go," said Dorothy. "No, I won't want a bonnet. I 've got one somewhere, under the bed, I guess," and, so saying, they set off. It required little skill to draw from this frank and fearless nature, as they walked, the history of a wandering life, of the children dead, of the half-witted husband, of her own long-continued asthma, now gone, as she hoped. It was told with curious vivacity,— with some sense of the humorous quality of complete disaster, and when she spoke of her dead it was with brief gravity, which seemed to deny sympathy or hasten away from it. As they moved along and her companion talked, Rose glanced with curiosity at the Quaker-born woman, who had lost nearly every trace of her origin. She walked well, and there was a certain distinctiveness, if not distinction, in her erect car

riage and refinement of feature, still visible after years of toil and troubles.

At last, after a pause, Rose spoke for herself.

"It seems to me wonderful that you, who have gone through so much, could have stood it as you seem to have done." She herself was at the opening age of doubts and questions. At times the discontentment of a life without the definite aims of a man's career distressed her. Yet she had surely all that one could ask of existence; and here was this poverty-haunted woman supremely cheerful under circumstances such as would have ruined all capacity for happiness in most of her sex. Rose went on, half surprised at her own frankness: ·

"I have everything in the world, and sometimes I am not happy. I ought to be ashamed."

"Well, Miss Rose, I did use to bother, but I gave it up. As long as you 're here, you 're here. I 'm like a pig Hiram used to have out West. He was a very enterprising pig, and was always a-trying to get into the pea-patch and out of his own field. One day I was watching that pig,— I used to think that pig could laugh,— well, he spied an angle of a great big, dead cottonwood-tree Hiram had set to stop the gap in a fence. You see, the two ends of it were in the field, and it was hollow right through trunk and limb, and the point of it stuck out into my pea-patch. So, Mr. Pig, in he goes, and after much scratching he got through the trunk, and then through the big branch, and then out he came, and there he was in the same field again. Well, he tried it three times and then he

gave it up; looked like he 'd have liked to scratch his head; and after that he was the contentedest pig you ever saw. And when sticking-time came, at Christmas, he did n't squeal any morsel louder than the rest. I guess I 'm a good deal like that pig. I 've quit trying to get out of my field, and so I just stay here and grin, and take what comes."

"Thank you," said Rose, smiling. "That is a delightful parable, Mrs. Maybrook." And with it Rose ceased awhile to hear what her companion said, and took stern measures with herself, because of the thoughts this woman's life and words had brought to her.

Dorothy was at times, when her audience suited her, a person who talked herself out in liberal amount, finding in self-utterance one of her few and most distinct pleasures. Yet she was never so full of herself as entirely to cease to think of others. She saw in a few minutes that Rose had lost hold of the talk, and was at intervals saying, "Yes, yes," in an absent way, so as to keep up a decent appearance of being still interested in her companion's words. Dorothy had by no means fine manners, but she had the automatically active instincts of a woman to whom tact was a natural gift. She too became silent, and they walked on for a time without more exchange of words.

Rose, like some young women of her age, was at times the easy prey of moods of absence, which carried her far enough from the hour or its company. She had preached herself a severe sermon, and now came back to the outer world again as they passed a marshy spot where, of a sudden, the whole-

some wood odors rose around her, that delightful commingling of the scent of moldering trunks, resinous weepings of the pine, and the sweetness of the breath of the young spruces. Nature said, in her most tender tones, "Come back to me out of your tangle of self-discussion, and I will give you rest." It was a delicately responsive organization to which this mute appeal was made, and the fine instrument answered to the call with no more consciousness of the gentle influence than has the swaying pine stirred to healthful exercise by the northland breeze.

"Don't you like the wood-smells?" she said.

"Me? I guess I do. That 's queer about Susan Colkett; asked her one day if she did n't love the spruce-smells, and she just said they had n't none."

"That was odd. I could never like that woman, but I am very, very sorry for her."

"Like her! Miss Rose, I saw her once killing chickens,— I never *can* do that,— and the woman was laughing all the while. I don't love her, but— There 's the house; you wait here in the woods; I 'll get her out, and then you can talk. Sit down on this log. I 'll fetch her."

"But are you not afraid, Mrs. Maybrook?"

"I? No; I 'm old and tough, and it would n't matter much — except for Hiram. There 'd be nobody to p'int him," and she laughed.

Then Rose took up her sermon again, and Dorothy walked to the back of the crumbling cabin, through the vileness of the cow-shed, which was connected with the house to save wintry exposures in caring for

the cattle, now reduced in number to one lank, milkless cow.

Two decrepit chickens fled as she came by, and a long-legged, high-roofed pig lifted his snout above his empty trough and grunted a famine-born appeal. Her feet were noiseless in the slough of muck through which she picked her way with a grimace of disgust. At the open back door she paused, hearing high voices within. About to enter, she halted abruptly, and a look of intense attention came upon her face. The speakers were hidden, but in the dimness at the far end of the room, she saw the half of the bed,—one broken leg of it tied up to a splint of wood,—and above, the white sheet upon the figure of the dead child. She stayed motionless a moment, at first merely shocked at the rude noises in the chamber of death, but, when about to knock, stopped short again at the hearing of her own name.

"Dory Maybrook 's a fool; don't tell me about her!"

"Well, I won't. Ain't I goin' to have no more of that money?" It was Joe Colkett who spoke.

"You took five dollars last night," said the woman. Her voice, strident and high-pitched, sent a shiver of discomfort through Dorothy. "Did n't think no man would be mean enough to steal from under a dead child's pillow!"

"I might ov took it all,—I 'm that miserable. Don't go to say I 'm drunk. I 'm not. What did you do with the rest of it, anyway?"

"I got Bill Churchman's wife to buy me a white gown down the river, to put on my child, and a white

sheet, and then there 's the money to fetch the preacher. I could n't get no sheet until I paid your reckonin' for whisky. There ain't much left."

"I 'm dreadful sorry," said the man.

"Oh, don't go a-whinin' round me! Just let me alone! I was a fool to have took a man like you, that ain't got no sense and no work in him!"

"I would n't ov sayed that, Susie."

"No? Well, I say it. What did that lawyer man tell you about the mortgage? When has we got to go?"

"Oh, he says we may bide till next winter; but he 's to have the cow and the pig."

"And you said you 'd give 'em up?"

"Yes. What could I ov done? Susie, don't you set there a-cryin'. I can git a lumber job, and we 'll look about, and Mr. Lyndsay he 'll give us a bit of money."

"No, he won't. Dory Maybrook she 'll tell him Mr. Carington gave you some money, and Dory she 'll tell him, too, it 's no use helpin' a drunken brute."

"I said I would n't drink no more, and I won't. You might believe me, Susie. Ain't I allus loved you, and slaved for you and them dead children, and not mine neither? I 'm not a bad man, if I do take a drop now and again."

"If you was a worse man, I 'd ov liked you better. A great strong man like you, and all these rich folks round here."

"What!" he exclaimed.

Dorothy started. She would have liked to see those two faces.

"If you was to care for me a little, Susie, I 'd do most anything you wanted."

"Ain't that Carington comin' up in September, and did n't he ask you to go into the woods after caribou with him? There ain't no better hunter than you in these parts." As she spoke, her voice became low and softer, so that the listener scarcely heard it. "Them city folks carries a lot of money about with 'em, and watches and things. We 've got to get away, and we 've got to live, Joe Colkett,—to live, I say!"

"Do you want me to steal the man's money?"

"Oh, stealin' gits found out. Ain't we been robbed? Who stole our house and all my man's earnin's?"

"What is it you want, Susie?" He spoke timidly.

"I want a man as is a man, and ain't afeard,—you ain't him!"

"Did n't I say I 'd do 'most anything for you?"

"'Most anything!"

"Well, anything." Then there was a moment of utter silence. "You would n't go to want me to do nothin' wrong."

"Well, you are a fool! Ain't folks lost in them woods sometimes, and never found?"

"I can't do it," said the man, hoarsely. "I said I could n't, and I can't. I—I can't," and he was heard moving to and fro in the agitated indecision of a great temptation. Dorothy began to fear that she would come into view.

"I can't," he repeated.

"But he will," murmured Dorothy, falling back noiselessly. Then, stepping through a break in the

rotten boards of the shed, she bent low among the alders and fled. When away in the woods, she walked until she came again to Rose. "They 're in," she said. "Mind, we 've just come. Don't let on I left you — hush — not now. There 's a reason. I can't explain now. Come."

Rose, rather bewildered, followed her. A few paces from the closed door she stood still, while Dorothy, going on, called gently, "Susie Colkett," and knocked as she spoke.

"Oh, it 's you!" said the mistress of the house, as she came forward to the doorway.

"Yes; Miss Lyndsay came up with me. Dear me! I 'm that tired!"

Mrs. Colkett, from her grim height of leanness, looked sharply at the speaker. "That ain't common with you." Then she came out and went up to Rose. "Won't you come in?" she said. "It ain't much of a house, but poor folks has got to put up with what they can git." The stooping carriage, the high, red cheek-bones, and the large, yellow teeth struck the young woman unpleasantly. That the mother said nothing of the dead child within seemed strange.

"I — I could n't now, — not now," said Rose, gently. "I wanted to say we were all so — so very sorry for you. It 's only just a year last week that my own little brother died, you know."

"And, Susie, it was the same thing, oh, just the same," said Dorothy, softly.

"My father would like to know if there is anything you want; anything — really anything we can do?"

"No," she said. At one moment she was filled with

eager greed to get all that was to be had out of these fine people; at the next she was shaken by a storm of anger at the contrast between these deaths. She had a crude remembrance of the decencies and order of the funeral of Harry Lyndsay, and then of Joe coming in with the rough coffin, of the place back in the woods where her two children lay in unmarked graves. On such recollections the mere brutalness of love of her offspring dwelt with savagery of comment. She had seen the small stone which had been set over the little Lyndsay, in the late spring, just before the family had come upon the river. These things had been in her mind for days, and now it was hard to conceal her feelings She would have liked to take an ax and break the modest memorial of their dead. She said, merely, "No, no!" to Rose, and then, shortly, "Joe and me are much obliged, miss."

"You will let us know if we can help you?" Her visible emotion Rose, very naturally, misinterpreted. Dorothy stood by, grave, silent, and watchful.

"Where 's your man?" she said, as Rose bade good-by and turned away. Joe, stunned, half afraid of his masterful temptress, had remained in the cabin. "Oh, Susie," added Dorothy, in lower tones, "I hope he has n't been drinking again?"

"What 's that your business?" returned the other woman. "Guess I can take care of my man."

"I am not so sure of that; but I did n't mean to offend you."

"Then you had n't ought to have meddled."

"All right," said Dorothy; "good-by"; and, turning, she left Mrs. Colkett and rejoined Rose.

"What a woman!" she said, and then for a time neither spoke.

When they were well on their way to the shore, Rose said: "I am troubled, Mrs. Maybrook, that I so dislike any one as unfortunate as that woman. But I don't like her. I never, never want to go there again, and I am sorry for her, too. Oh, I am as sorry as I can be; but —"

Dorothy simply said, "I do not wonder." And then, with a laugh, "The fact is, Miss Rose, that Colkett woman 's bad; and, for my part, I 'm a right lop-sided Christian. I can't put on mourning for rattle-snakes just the same as for doves. It 's a kind of comfort to find you are n't much better than I am."

"I,— indeed not!"

Meanwhile Dorothy was debating in her mind how much she should tell her companion. A side glance at the fresh young maiden face decided her. "I said along back I would explain what kept me so long. I cannot. They were talking about me. It was n't very pleasant. I overheard something disagreeable. I reckon I 'll come over and see about it with Mr. Lyndsay. Do you chance to know Mr. Carington that fishes up to Island Camp?"

"No." Rose felt that whatever was withheld concerned — must concern — this gentleman. "But I am immensely curious," she said.

"Are you?" cried Dorothy, laughing. "I am going to keep my mouth shut for twenty-four hours, and that 's real, rity-dity penance, I can tell you! Did you never see Mr. Carington? Why, he 's right up river, just two or three miles."

CHAPTER IX

T breakfast next day, Rose came in late.

"What, overslept yourself?" said her father, as she went the round of the table with her morning kisses.

"Yes; I could n't get to sleep."

"And what kept you awake?" said Miss Anne, who still, to the surprise of all, appeared almost daily at the morning meal. "A penny for your thoughts."

"I was guessing a riddle; but I took it into my sleep unanswered."

"A good many riddles have been answered in sleep," said Miss Anne. "Was yours?"

"No. Oh, no, Master Ned; I shall not tell it."

"That 's the hardest riddle ever was," cried the boy. "I have to guess what the riddle is, and then what the answer is."

"You will never, never know."

"May we ask twenty questions about it?" said Dick. "Animal, vegetable, or mineral?"

"I should be puzzled. To what kingdom do morals belong?"

"Why, who ever heard of mineral or vegetable morals?"

"The last might admit of illustration," said Miss

Anne; and she began to consider within herself the people she knew who had what she called vegetable morals.

"Is there a man in your riddle?" cried Jack.

"A Boss-town man," said Dick, with a grin.

"Pinch him, Jack," said Rose.

"Oh!" cried Dick, responsive to the promptly applied punishment, and making a wry face. "You would be awfully good at a Jersey courtship, Rose, especially if you got Jack to help."

"A good friend at a pinch," said Jack. And so these foolish people rattled on, and by and by Mrs. Lyndsay said:

"Rose, you have not told us anything about Mrs. Maybrook and those poor Colketts. I did not ask you last night, you were so sleepy."

"Don't ask me now," said Rose. "I never saw such a horrible creature as that woman."

"But her child is dead!" said Mrs. Lyndsay, with gentle inconsequence.

"I think her altogether hateful," insisted Rose.

"Altogether hateful?" cried Anne. "I like these complete natures. It must simplify things in life so satisfactorily. Amiability would become so useless an effort. To be altogether and hopelessly aside from the possibilities of affection or respect might save a deal of moral exertion."

"I don't think I understand," said Mrs. Lyndsay; "or, if I do, I am very sure that it is n't a nice thing to say. Would n't it be as simple and better to be altogether lovable?"

"No, no," cried Anne; "you have tried that, and

does it really pay, dear?" Margaret was a trifle uncertain as to the compliment, and Anne, much delighted at her game of what she called mental cat's-cradle, was about to go on, when Pierre came in.

"Ah, here is the mail," said Lyndsay, and emptied out the bag on a side-table.

"I have been yearning for a newspaper," said Anne.

"Not I," cried her brother, as he walked around the table distributing the letters. "Ah," he said, "my friend North. He was to have joined us with his wife next week, Anne; but Clayborne is dead. You will all be sorry to hear that. North says — it is, as usual, interesting. Shall I read it?"

"Oh, certainly, Archie,—all of it. I am very sorry. It will be a great loss to Dr. North."

"And to our too small world of letters," added Lyndsay.

"He says, 'We — that is, Vincent and I — had spent two hours with our old friend in that great book-clad room we all know. We came away talking of his vast knowledge of medieval men and things. I had chanced to say I wondered how a gentleman in the fifteenth century spent a day, and he had at once told it all in curious detail — as to hours, dress, diet, and occupations. I left Vincent and went back for a book I had meant to borrow. When I entered, Clayborne was seated as usual with a little book in his hand. As he did not stir, I went up to him. The book was kept open by his palm. I stooped over him and saw that the book was Fulke Greville's on Democracy. He was dead. He had noiselessly gone out, without

stir of a finger. He must have been receiving ideas, dealing with them, and then —' See, Margaret, this is his symbol of death. 'I suppose, dear Lyndsay, you will think it strange that I sat still a half-hour beside my dead friend. I never felt the other world so close; it seemed within touch. At last — as the great frame began to stiffen — the book fell. I took it, marked the place, and put it in my pocket.'

"The rest," said Lyndsay, "is of less interest."

"A happy exit," said Anne.

"I cannot think that," returned Margaret. "I should want to know that I was dying."

"One rarely does," said her husband. "You get muddled, and say and do foolish and ill-bred things. I sympathize with a friend of mine who gave orders that he was to be left to die alone."

"How horrible! How unnatural!"

"No, no," cried Anne; "it is you who are 'un-natured.' But imagine dying with such a dull book in hand! I was wondering what book I should want to have last seen on earth."

"I can think of but one, Anne."

"Oh, that is not one book. Why call it a book? It is the books of many men. Besides,— and this is terrible, Margaret,— I should like it to have been some very earthsome book,—I had to coin an adjective,— and I should like it to be like Ned's friend — several."

Margaret was critically silent. All this was in a way unpleasant to her, as the unusual is always to some people.

"I do not think," said Lyndsay, "I know with what thoughts I should like to go hand in hand out of life.

He was a fine, irritable old fellow. The critics won't bother him now."

"Who can tell? There may be archangelic critics, for all we know," returned Anne. "However, perhaps one won't mind it. You know what Hafiz says: 'Happy are the dead, for they shall inherit the kingdom of indifference.'"

"Anne! Anne!" exclaimed Mrs. Lyndsay.

"Between papa's Aurelius and Aunt Anne's Persian poets," said Rose, in haste to intervene, "the fairy-land of bewilderment is never far away."

"I have the wicked worldliness, brother, to want to know how Mr. Clayborne left his money. Was n't he rich?"

"Yes. Wait a moment. He divided it, North says, between him — that is North, dear; I am glad of that; it will be in wise hands — and, really, that queer creature, St. Clair; but he was clever enough to put his share in trust."

"I am very glad. That too delightful man!" exclaimed Rose. "Do you remember, Aunt Anne, the morning we spent with him at the Louvre? It was like walking about with some Greek sculptor. He seemed to be away in Athens while he talked."

"It was certainly interesting," said her aunt. "A trifle naturalistic at times, I thought."

"Was he? I don't know. We used to wonder, mama, if he ever really cared for Alice Leigh. After that morning I made up my mind he never did. He spent ten minutes comparing her head and neck to that of the Diana."

"What a feminine test!" said Lyndsay. "If a man

were to tell you that you looked like the Venus of Melos, Rose, would you say, 'No, sir; you can't care for me. It is impossible. I shall always,' etc., etc. —the usual formula?"

"You are too bad, Pardy! My convictions are unshaken. Mr. St. Clair told me; he did not tell her. If he had told her, I know he would have said it in that soft, convinced way. She would have liked it."

"I see," said Lyndsay; "it becomes clearer."

"Why do men sneer at him? I think him — well, I think him indescribably attractive. The word 'fascinating' would answer. And I am sorry for poor Mrs. North; oh, I am! Fascinating — yes, that is what *I* should call him, and oddly unconventional."

"I think you young folks are too apt to use that word 'fascinating,'" said her mother. "I have no liking for these men who can fascinate, and can't hold fast to the affections of any one."

At this Anne burst into inextinguishable laughter, and, with one hand pressed on the aching side which was so apt to check her wilder mirth, she held out the other to the astonished Mrs. Lyndsay, exclaiming:

"A forfeit — a pun from Margaret. Five cents — ten cents; a forfeit!"

"And what did I say?"

"Oh!" cried Rose.—"the dear mama! She said — she said a man who could fascinate and not hold on to one. Oh, mama, how could you?"

"But I did n't. I never meant such a thing."

"Yes! yes!" they cried; and, laughing, got up from table amidst continued protests from the innocent punster.

Rose followed her father on to the porch.

"Mrs. Maybrook will be over at ten. She wants to see you. I told her you would not fish to-day."

"What is it she wants?"

"I do not know. Something serious, I fancy."

"No new trouble for her, I hope. By the way, old Polycarp's bowman is sick to-day and cannot go with you. Anne, for a wonder, wishes to go on the water. Ned shall take Pierre. Not to disappoint you, I sent Polycarp early up to the clearings to get a bowman. He will be back shortly. Good luck to you!" And he went in to his letters, while Rose arranged her fishing-basket, put in it a couple of books, and sat down to look over the bright assortment of feathered lures in her father's fly-book. Now and then she glanced up the river, but no boat appeared.

Meanwhile Mrs. Maybrook came, and went. Rose heard her father say to her, as she went out:

"No; it must not be left in doubt." He was of opinion that it might mean little; but it might, on the other hand, mean much. Many are tempted, and few fall. The idea of crime on this quiet river seemed almost absurd to him. He added, "I shall mention it, you may feel sure of that, Mrs. Maybrook. A Lady Macbeth in business up here is queer enough."

"I certainly do think he ought to be told," said Dorothy.

These bits of talk much puzzled Rose. As to Dorothy, she lingered a while to chat with Anne, who sat with her hands in her lap in that entire idleness which more than any other thing on earth exasperated Margaret Lyndsay. Below, on the beach, Ned was prepar-

ing, a little troubled because the other boys were not to go with him, while they, quite reconciled to the decree of parental fate, were gaily launching their canoe, and singing, as they poled up-stream:

"I would not gi'e my bonny Rose,
My bonny Rose-a-Lyndsaye,
For all the wealth the ocean knows,
Or the wale of the lands of Lyndsaye."

Then Rose waved her handkerchief, and, much disappointed, again took her field-glass and still saw no canoe. At last Mrs. Lyndsay came out, and they sat in the pleasant sunshine, the mother sewing with even constancy, which as seriously annoyed Anne as her own absence of all manual employ did the little mother.

Very soon Anne became engaged in her usual amusement of recklessly tangling some one in the toils of statements, arguments, and opinions in which she herself had no serious belief; since, I should add, this bright, humorous, and strangely learned creature was, under all, a woman of strong views and deliberately won religious beliefs.

When Rose, distracted from her regrets at the loss of the forenoon fishing, began to hear the talk, Anne had just said:

"I don't see how the world could go on at all without fibs."

Upon which Mrs. Lyndsay, despite years of acquaintance with her sister-in-law, pricked her finger and dropped her thimble, and took to her fan.

"You see, there is no commandment against it, Margaret."

"But, Anne, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness,'" said Mrs. Lyndsay.

"But suppose I tell a harmless fib about myself, or praise some one I should like to — to slap?"

"It 's all false witness, I reckon," said Dorothy. "If I ain't my own neighbor, I 'd like to know who is?"

Anne smiled. That this fly was not easily meshed in her sophistical web only excited the spider.

"It would be a horrid addition to one's responsibilities to be one's own neighbor. I should move away. After all, Margaret, is n't the chief use of habitual truthfulness to enable one at need to lie with useful probability of being believed?"

By this time Mrs. Lyndsay was nearly past the possibility of remonstrance. She let fall the work she had resumed, and, rocking steadily, began to fan herself with deliberate slowness. A little she suspected this baited snare; but not to seize it was beyond her power of self-control.

"I am thankful my boys are not here. You will say it is a jest. Whether it is a jest or not, it is equally the kind of thing which should not be said — ever," and here she shut the fan with decision, as if that also closed the argument.

"I was thinking I 'm rather on Miss Anne's side," said Dorothy. "There 's a heap of righteousness in some lies. Now, if I had n't been a dreadful truth-speaking woman a good many years, my Hiram would n't believe me now; and the fact is I just stuff that man full of lies nowadays. I just chuck them around like you feed chickens. I tell him he looks

better every day, and how he is getting stronger Miss Anne, I should n't wonder a bit if the Lord loved a right cheerful liar."

"Good gracious!" said Margaret Lyndsay. "Dorothy, how can a good woman like you say such things?"

"I can. And he 's a-failing before my very eyes," she added, upon which she became silent. A tear or two dropped down her cheeks. "Now, would n't you lie, Mrs. Lyndsay, if you was me?"

Anne looked up with interest as to what the answer might be.

"I might; I would," said Margaret. "I am afraid I should." Then she put a sympathetic hand on her friend's knee, while Anne looked grave, and Rose watched Dorothy, with instant pity in her heart.

But this was not Dorothy's common way.

"My lands! I 've been making a fool of myself!" She had the aversion of the strong to the alms of sympathy. As she spoke she rose. "Come over and see me when you feel right good, Miss Anne. I do love a talk—and my roses! I 've got a lot of them to blooming this year, and if that is n't enough to make a woman happy, what is?"

With this she said good-by and went down to the beach. Anne watched with envy, in which was no unkindliness, the vigor with which the dugout shot forth from the shore. "A fine nature, that. It does one good to talk to her. Example is a strange medicine. It is hard to analyze its value. Because she endures with patience, I may. Yes; my helps are larger."

As Mrs. Maybrook walked up to her house she thought over, as was the habit of her lonely life, the talk she had had with Mr. Lyndsay and its occasion. In her younger days of wandering, Hiram and she had lived long amidst rough people in the West, among miners and loose ruffians of all degrees of wickedness. Thus the idea of crime was not so unfamiliar as to strike her as it did Lyndsay. She had seen men shot, and had been where murder and plunder were common. She had overheard a half-evolved scheme of villainy, one to be easily thwarted; nor, knowing, as she did, Colkett and his wife, did it greatly amaze her. Still, it was rare to hear of crime on the river. She had found more or less explanation of this wickedness in what she remembered of the Colketts, and had said in explanation to Mr. Lyndsay:

"She was a right fine-looking woman when she married Joe Colkett; but she never was less than bad. She 's about the only one I ever came across that would give her man — that is, her first man — drink, and buy it for him, too, till she poisoned him. When the children came, and two were idiots, like drunkards' brats are, as every one knows, she put it all on her first man — Fairlamb was his name. At last she was left with them, and nothing to do but get another man. She 'd have married 'most any one to keep those children. That 's the only good about her; but the funny thing is the way that stump of a fellow does love her. He does, though!"

"A queer story!" said Lyndsay.

Now, as she walked homeward, she said to herself, "But who on earth was that Lady Macbeth Mr.

Lyndsay talked about? It must be a book. I forgot to ask. Think I 'd like to read it. I 'll ask Miss Anne. The way a woman p'ints a man is the thing. Guess I 've always p'inted Hiram straight, thank the Lord! I wonder if he 's seen about mending that scythe?"

Meanwhile, by noon, came lazily back Polycarp and the canoe, without a bowman. Lyndsay was vexed. There had been no one at the clearings who could be had. Pierre, when he came in, must go down with the mail. Said Lyndsay:

"Go back at once. Stop at the Island Camp. There seems to be a lot of men about there. I saw four canoes on the shore. The lumbermen are driving on that reach. Some one said a photographer was camped there. He can't want both of his men. Don't ask the gentlemen for a man; I don't know them. Now, mind what I say. Find somebody; I 'll pay him a dollar for his half-day, but don't come back without a bowman."

"It 's a great thing the way you p'int a man, papa," said Rose. "Mrs. Maybrook has the trick of it."

"He 'll find some one now. You had better fish the rock stretch, a mile above the Island Camp. The Indian knows, and no one has cast a fly there yet. Be careful not to get on Mr. Carington's water. Watch Polycarp, or he 'll let you fish down to the bay. They are all born poachers, these fellows."

Polycarp said "Yes," and no more, and poled doggedly away up the river, not over well pleased. At the camp he beached his canoe. The photographer had gone. The lumbermen could none of

them get leave; and the Indian, pleased at the prospect of a lazy half-day with his pipe, was on his way back to his canoe, when the tent-fly of the larger canvas home was parted, and he heard:

"Halloa! Want anything?"

"Want man for bow to pole down at Cliff Camp. Mr. Lyndsay he goin' a-fishin', and my man sick — hurt leg. No much good."

"Well, ask the lumbermen."

"No make any use." At this appeared a second man, also, like the first, in knickerbockers. He wore a glass on one eye, and looked Polycarp over curiously. Then he went back, and lay down with a novel and a pipe.

"Hold on!" said Carington. "Take one of our men; Mr. Ellett is n't going to fish to-day." Then his face lit up with a quick look of merriment. "What fun! I 'll go myself!"

"You would n't do that? I would n't do that!" said a voice from the tent. Now, opposition was to this young man like fuel to fire.

"Why not?" he said.

"Might be awkward."

"Oh, you be hanged! Look here, my man, what 's your name?"

"Polycarp."

"Well, you antique saint, I mean to go down with you and pole for your Mr. — what 's his name? oh, Lyndsay, is it? I can pole. Don't be afraid. Here 's a dollar if you don't let on,—tell, I mean."

The Indian grinned.

"This is a spree, Polyglot — Poly-carp — Poly-sal-

mon, or whatever your multitudinous fishy name is. Do you know what a spree is?"

"Plenty heap whisky," said the Indian.

"Well, there are varieties. Can you hold your tongue?"

"Yes—can hold tongue."

"You can fib a bit?"

"Heap much."

"Then remember I am one of the men up here, no matter who."

"Well, of all the absurd things!" said the mentor within the tent.

"By St. Botolph, as they say in Boston, I need a little absurdity to make a decent average after a fortnight with you, you confounded old conventional *et cætera*." And, talking or laughing, he presently emerged in pretty well soiled velveteens, a dingy jacket, slouched felt hat, and his trousers stuffed in his long boots.

"Are you really going?" said Ellett.

"I am. Come along, Polycarp. I fancy I 'm dressed in character. What fun! He will want to pay me," and he whistled as he pushed the bow out into the stream and sat down to paddle.

Meanwhile Mr. Oliver Ellett considered his vanishing friend from afar with mingled feelings of dismay and admiration. "That is a very remarkable man. I could n't possibly have done that. I think there are several brief insanities besides anger." Then, as if surprised at his own cleverness, he added, "I wish Carington had heard that. Confound it!" and he smote an army of unseen midges who had taken ad-

vantage of his abstraction to prey on the ruddy cheeks, which, with a slight tendency to stoutness of girth, gave him a look of youthfulness he much detested.

"What was it Fred said last night about remorse and midges? Confound it, I forget. Blank the things! Get a smudge, Steve,—two smudges!" And he retired again to the tent and his novel.

He had been drowsily considering the fates of a despairing young woman for a half-hour or more, when he was aware of an unfamiliar voice outside of the tent. Steve, the guide, an honest, good-tempered Gaspé man, was heard to say:

"Mr. Carington—he went away a bit back. I did n't see him, sir. I was getting cedar bark for smudges."

"Where did he go?"

"Michelle, where is Mr. Carington? Where did he go?"

"The bowman, fully prepared, replied at once:

"I don't rightly know."

At this Mr. Ellett bounded from his mattress, and appeared without. The voice he heard first was unmistakably that of a man of his own world.

"Beg pardon," he said; "I was dozing. I am Mr. Oliver Ellett. Won't you come in?"

"No, thank you. I have but a few minutes. I am Mr. Lyndsay, from the Cliff Camp. I came to see Mr. Carington. Is he here?"

"No. He has gone off somewhere."

"On the river?"

"I don't think he is fishing. Perhaps, if you were to come in and wait a little, he might turn up."

But this Lyndsay declined. He had run up with Pierre's canoe, and must return to get rid of some yet unanswered letters and be in time to fish the lower pool.

At last, after a little chat about the salmon, he said: "Are you not Oliver Ellett's son, of Boston? I think it must be so: the resemblance is strong. We were classmates at Harvard."

"Yes," said Ellett; "he was my father."

"He was stroke-oar in my boat. If you are as good a fellow — oh, if you are half as good a fellow — we shall be glad to see you and your friend at the Cliff Camp."

"It will give us great pleasure; and what shall I say to Carington?"

"That can wait. By the way, I sent that Indian of mine to the lumbermen to get a bowman for half a day. I trust he did not trouble you. I gave him strict orders. I saw he had been successful. We passed him as I came up."

"Yes, he got some one," said Ellett. "It was not one of our men." And so, with further talk of flies and fish, he carefully conducted Mr. Lyndsay to his canoe, and was relieved to hear him tell Pierre to land him on the far shore.

"One feels the need to use one's legs here. Meet me at the timber brow," he said to Pierre. "I shall walk fast. Good-by, Mr. Ellett, and come soon to see us."

Ellett stood a moment, and then went back to his tent. "I wonder whom he is to pole for? It is n't Mr. Lyndsay. Christopher Columbus! What a lot of mischief you are responsible for! No wonder Fred says you have pretty near as much sin to your count as that fair explorer who discovered the new world of wickedness. By George! If it should be the woman! He stared at her, Sunday, through his glass as they went by, until I told him it was n't decent. He said it did bring her pretty close. Well, I never heard of falling in love through a telescope. Now, that was n't a bad idea at all." He had no high estimate of himself, and was occasionally overcome at his own cleverness. "This beats my novel all to bits. More smudge, Michelle!"

Meanwhile the canoe ran down-stream, Fred Carington in the bow, and Polycarp, with his changeless, coppery visage, astern.

As the Indian had by no means hurried himself, the morning was past and luncheon long over when Rose saw the canoe returning. Lyndsay had not come back. At all events, she would have the afternoon fishing.

CHAPTER X.

HEN Mr. Lyndsay reached home, Rose had gone, and he had no chance to take a look at the new bowman: he hoped he was competent. The man in the bow especially has to judge with decision as to the watery way before him, to avoid shallows, to look out for rocks, and instantly to obey every order from the stern.

When Polycarp's birch, for the Indians always use the bark canoe, ran close to the beach, the bowman stepped out, as the way is, into the water and drew the bark to the shore. Polycarp, silent as a monk of La Trappe, went up the steps. The boys were absent, Miss Anne was off with big-voiced Tom, and Mr. Lyndsay had not returned. Caringtón began to be curious. "Great Scott!" he exclaimed, for here was a young woman coming gaily down the steps. She wore a boy's cap and carried a basket. Behind her came Polycarp with her rods.

It is the business of the bowman to use his eyes and not his tongue. The former were now discreetly busy. I scarcely ever knew a talkative bowman. Talk is the privilege of the man at the stern, who rarely hesitates to advise as to the handling of a fish, or to converse with easy freedom.

"I scarcely bargained for this," said Fred to himself. "It 's high comedy, rather. I am in for it. Here goes!" And he drew the side of the birch close to the shore, readjusted a stone or two of those placed for landing and then steadied the canoe. Miss Lyndsay put a hand on his shoulder, stepped lightly in, and sat down. As usual in this watery travel the low seat for the fisherman is set to face in the direction in which the boat moves, so as to give the view ahead. When about to fish the canoe is run ashore,— beached, they say,— and the seat is turned so as to look to the stern.

"We are to fish the upper — the rock pool, Polycarp; above the Island Camp — a mile or so, I believe."

"Me know."

"And you are to be careful not to go beyond a certain dead pine, or to get onto the water of the Island Camp. We don't know those people, and I wish to be careful.'

"Me know. Last drop best. Have to cast a little over. No help it."

"No, not a foot! These are a couple of Boston gentlemen, and very likely to be disagreeable as to boundaries." Rose was thinking aloud.

Thereupon the bowman was tempted —"I did hear tell they was awful nice men."

"Indeed!" said Rose, not fancying this reply.

"There won't nobody know," muttered Polycarp, with a chuckle.

"You bad old poacher," she returned, laughing. "Here is some tobacco for you; you may smoke, but I can't have you chewing. As to poaching, I hope it won't be necessary."

As she spoke, the poles clinked as one on the rocks and pebbles, and, keeping close to shore, they gradually forged up-stream, Rose lying back at lazy ease, and hardly hearing the rare words of order or warning from stern to bow. By and by, being, as I have said, an observant young person, she fell to noticing the symmetry and strong lines of her bowman's figure, and then the thick, brown half-curl of hair under the felt hat. The action, as it repeated itself over and over, struck her fancy. She took at last to analyzing the movement, which beautifully brings out the curves of the tense muscles. She saw that poling on the right side begins with the left hand above, the right below; and that, in the recover and forward lift for a new hold on the bottom, the right hand is shifted above the left, and the pole is carried forward through the relaxed grip of the left hand, and the push begins again. At last she took out her sketch-book, and pretty soon caught a neat likeness of the man in the last moment of the forward shove, when the balancing power of the man in these unsteady vessels is the most severely tried. Her unconscious model, now warming to the work, had half forgotten the awkwardness of the position in the pleasure of this manly use of well-trained muscles. A little later and he saw Ellett, as they sat down to take their paddles to cross the quieter water before the camp, in order to win the farther shore. "Confound his impudence!" said Carington to himself, as he became aware of his friend coolly inspecting them with a field-glass from a bank on the margin.

"Who is that man?" said Miss Lyndsay, turning toward Polycarp.

"Not know name."

"Are n't there two gentlemen fishing this reach? How much water have they?"

An Indian usually answers the last question, taking no notice of the first. "They got Mr. George — his water. From bogan up to big tree."

"Bogan? What is that?"

"Just bogan," said Polycarp. His descriptive powers, as well as his English, were limited. The word which puzzled her is probably an old English term. Still unsatisfied, Rose addressed the tall bowman. "What is your name, bowman?"

"Frederick, ma'am."

"But your whole name?"

"Fairfield." In fact, it was his middle name.

"What is a bogan, Fairfield?"

"A kind of a little bay like." He was about to say a *cul-de-sac*, but stayed his tongue in time.

"And what is that yellow stuff all along the shore? It looks like sulphur."

"It 's the pollen of the alders."

"Pollen!" said Rose.

"Yes; that 's what the gentlemen calls it. Drops off them bushes, ma'am. Pullen or pollen — I don't rightly mind."

"Where is our pool, Polycarp?"

"'Most to it now."

"Oh, there are the burnt lands," said Rose. "What a dreadfully sad-looking place!" This was a mere personal reflection, unaddressed; but the bowman

was now in the spirit of his part, and made a shy cast for a rise of interest in his human freight.

"It 's right mournsome-like."

The fish rose. "What a beautiful word! Mournsome! Fearsome is another good word up here."

"Had n't we best anchor?" said Carington. "I say, Polycarp, how is it? I don't know this upper water."

Rose took a look at the back of this curly head. The voice had not the intonations of Gaspé, but rang out clear over the noise of the rapids. Also the "a's" were broad, and there was a decided south-land note in it, with which Rose was too unfamiliar to cause suspicion. Polycarp silently turned the canoe, and in a moment beached it. Rose stood; the chair was shifted, and now in a few moments they were at the top of the pool, a swift flow of dark water all around them.

"Anchor—drop," said Polycarp, as they swung to the current. "Keepee hold short."

The stream was a hundred yards wide. The hills rose high to right, and already a favoring shadow was on the pool. Rose had lost much time by reason of this trouble about the bowman. It was well on toward evening. A fish leaped below and then another. It was of a truth most beautiful, and the man in the bow, who was now behind Rose, was longing to say as much, but Rose was intent on other matters. A moderate-sized Jock Scott was adjusted, and she began to cast,—still awkwardly enough.

"I must stand," said Rose. Then she cast better, but still in vain. An hour went by. Two people

were beginning to consider it a little dull. At last once more Polycarp said, "Drop!" Rose laid her rod on the thwarts, as they slid down some thirty feet, the fly and leader hanging in the water, and the butt behind her. Of a sudden there was a mad splash, the reel ran out, and the bowman, catching the butt, raised the rod, and, leaning over her, put it in her hands. "Take care!" he said, "he 's off," and away he went across the water.

"How splendid!" cried Rose, as she lowered the tip, when the fish made a mighty leap, eighty feet away, and his silvery arched form fell amidst foam onto the dark waves.

"Look out! More jump!" cried the Indian; and again the reel clicked busily.

"Reel! Reel!" said the bowman. "Well done, miss! Reel! Logs coming, Polycarp!" It was true. A half-dozen dark logs were coming down on them.

"Darn logs!" said the Indian, much excited. "You hold hard now. Tip up!"

"Yes. Tip up! tip up!" cried Carington. "There, can you hold him? If you can't, he will get the line among the logs." They were now out of the current in a side eddy. "So — so! Hold there, Polycarp! If he waits a half-minute before he runs, we shall have him. Good! He 's coming! Now lift him, miss! Well done! Reel! Reel! These running fish don't last."

"See belly,— much dead. Yah," said the Indian; and the gaff was in, and, amidst laughter and wild splashing, which covered her with water, a fine salmon was in the boat.

"Admirably done, miss!" said Carington. "That was well handled." Then he added, "Them fresh-run fish is tough uns."

Rose began, even amid her tire and excitement, to be a little puzzled. However, they went back to the same drop, and the casting went on as before. A half-hour passed. It was now long after six o'clock.

"See him rise, ma'am?" said Polycarp. "Best fish—heap late, heap best fish."

She cast again, and this time saw the swirl in the water and a glance of white.

"Much hungry!"

After a little while the fly was changed, and then again, until at last the first fly was tried anew.

"No good! He no come!"

"Hold on a moment," said Carington. "Try this"; and he took from his head his soft felt hat and threw it over to Polycarp. "There 's a fly in the band: try that. It is a white miller."

"No good!" said Polycarp; but he put it on. The next moment Rose saw a fish dart sideways through the water, and with open mouth take the fly. Then the anchor was up, and the fish away for a wild run down-stream, the reel whizzing, pausing, and whizzing again. For a half-hour of running and reeling this went on. At length the fish hung out steadily in the strong water, his head to the current, while Rose with all her power held him.

"These runs down-stream are rare," said Carington; "How strong he is!"

For an hour the sky had been overcast, and the river-bed in the nest of hills was fast growing dim.

"Are you tired?" said the bowman. "Shall I take the rod? It might spell you."

"Oh, no! Thank you! No."

"Give him a little line—so, slowly; but be careful. Drop the tip a little. It may tempt him to run again. No! How he holds on! Might I suggest, Miss Lyndsay,"—he had quite forgotten his part in the excitement of the contest,—"may I suggest that we drop below him?"

This was tried. The fish came duly down-stream. The canoe was again brought to the bank, and again there was the salmon out in the heavy water. Each motion of his tail revealed itself by a single "click, click" of the reel. It was now dusk.

"It is that limp rod: it has no power," said Carington, and, reaching over, he caught a few small stones from the bank, and threw them at the point where at the end of a perilously tense line the fish still held his place.

"No much good!"

At last she got in a little line. The salmon was now not over twenty feet from her rod-tip; but she could no longer see, and it was near to eight o'clock, and, by reason of the coming storm, far more dark than usual at that hour.

"I shall be eaten by the sand-flies," said Rose. "How they bite!" It was now too dark to see line or rod-tip.

"Hold her, Polycarp," said the bowman. "I will make a smudge." And in a moment a thick smoke was whirling from the beach, and cast around her by the rising wind. Then, of a sudden, the smudge,

blown into ruddy flame, sent a long flare of light across the water. In an instant the line came home.

"He is gone!" cried Rose, in accents of despair.

"No! no!" cried Carington, from the beach: "reel!"

The fish, caught by the light, had rushed wildly toward it, and run his nose onto the shore. The bowman, catching first a handful of gravel, seized it by the tail, and threw it high up onto the shore, the rod-tip snapping as Rose threw it back of her.

"Did any one ever see the like?" said Carington.

"Me see — twice — two time," said the Indian, as he took the spring balance from the fishing-basket.

"Oh, this is fishing!" cried Rose. "It must be quite two hours! I know what papa will say. He will say, 'Bad fishing!'"

"But I assure you," said Carington, from the darkened shore, eight or ten feet away, "I can assure you no one could have handled that fish better!"

At this Rose was struck silent, and now she wanted to get a good look at this eccentric bowman.

"No see," said Polycarp; "'bout twenty-nine pound; got match?"

"Ah!" she exclaimed, for now in an instant there fell a fury of driving rain, which struck her on the face and hands like spent shot.

"Let me help you," said Carington. "Here. How dark it is! Take my hand. This spruce will hold off the rain a while." Rose leaped out in haste.

"It won't last," added the bowman.

"But what does my fish weigh? Could n't you strike a match and see? I want to know."

"Certainly, ma'am!" he said, urgently sensible of

the need to get back into character. "Best get it weighed soon. Them fish drops weight a lot." So saying, he took out a silver match-box, and, taking three matches together, struck them on his corduroys, and hastily covered them with the cavern every smoker knows how to make with his hands. The wind put them out at once.

"No good!" said Polycarp.

"But I must know what my fish weighs," urged this persistent young woman.

"Of course, ma'am!" said the much-amused Carington.

It had become suddenly still darker. Above them the storm roared, as it tossed the plumes of the unseen tree-tops, and the spruce was no longer a cover. Miss Lyndsay squirmed, and gave a little laugh, as more and more insolent drops crawled down her back.

"Do hurry," she said, "my good man."

Meanwhile, Carington again lit a match, this time in the shelter of his hat, and kindled the resinous tips of a pine-branch he had torn away.

"Thirty-one pounds and over—say thirty-two." As he spoke he held up the fiercely blazing branch, so that its red-and-orange light flared over the water, and, seen in a million drops, cast for a moment dancing shadows through the dense woodlands back of them. In this wild light the Indian's visage stood out like some antique bronze, and she saw for the first time clearly a smiling brown face, clean shaven except for a slight mustache. The bowman threw the branch on the water, where it sparkled a mo-

ment, and said, cheerfully, "Will the canoe live in this wind, Polycarp?"

"Not know! Big much blow!"

"Confound it!" said the bowman. "I think we had better wait a bit, ma'am. Kind of rains like them clouds was buckets turned upside down. It can't last. Are you gettin' wet, ma'am?"

"No, I am wet," said Rose. "Mama will be so uneasy. Could n't we go? We must go! How long will it last?"

Polycarp was silent, and the deluge went on pattering on the maples, humming softly on the water when the wind ceased, and the intervals of quiet let into the ear the myriad noises of the falling drops. Rose set her soul to be patient. She was now too cold for comfort, and very hopelessly soaked. But it was like her to say, "It is nobody's fault, and, after all, it is great fun." Then Carington, liking the courage and good sense of the woman, forgot himself again.

"Don't you think it is a little difficult sometimes to say just where amusement ends, and — the other thing begins?"

"What other thing?" said Rose, too wet and shivering to be acutely critical.

"Oh — discomfort!"

"But I think one may be both amused and uncomfortable."

"Guess that 's so, miss," said the actor. "It is holding up a little. The clouds are breaking. By George! we have a moon — a bit of one!"

"Go now," said the sternman, as he tilted the canoe to rid it of water.

"Can we risk it? Are you sure?" said Rose.

Carington smiled. He was about to add, gaily, "Miss Lyndsay's carriage stops the way." He did say, "All right, ma'am. It rains a mawsel, but the wind 's nigh done. We 'd have risked it alone. All ready?"

In a moment they were away, in the power of the great river's night march to the sea. Never had Rose felt as full a sense of this vast energy of resistless water. Again, as once before, she realized the feeling of being walled in by darkness. Then there came the fierce rush through white water, and things like gray hands tossed up to right and left.

"Look sharp for salmon pillow," said the Indian.

"Yes, yes!" cried Carington, intent on the stream before him, silent, a little anxious. "Left! left!" he cried. And Rose saw close by, as they fled on, a huge lift of waves, and then again they were away in a more quiet current, and the moon was out and the torn clouds were racing across its steady silver.

"Here 's a paddle, ma'am," said the bowman. "Try to use it; it will keep you warm."

"Thanks," she returned. "What a good idea, Fairfield!" And now in a few moments she was more and more comfortable, and in proportion inclined to talk and reflect. She concluded that the bowman must have been thrown much with gentlemen in the fishing-season. She wondered if, on the whole, it was good for a man in his position to see the easy comfort of camps, the free use of money, and then to fall back into the hardships and ex-

posures of the winter lumbering. The man puzzled her a little as she tried to reconcile him as he at times had appeared with what she knew must be his common existence.

"Is lumbering hard work, Fairfield?" She was now seated so as again to face his back.

"The woods, ma'am, is it, or the drive?" He was safe here. No man knew better this wood-life.

"Oh!— both."

"The spring drive is pretty stiff work; beats a circus, ma'am, jumpin' from log to log in quick water. Ever see a circus?" he added, with ingenuous innocence.

"Of course, often."

".I 'd like to see a circus. I did hear tell of one once. There 's the lights. Best let them know"— and he smote the waters with the flat of his paddle. "Guess they 'll hear that."

The next moment they ran on to the beach, where Mr. Lyndsay was standing. He had been somewhat anxious, but had laughed at the women's fears.

"All right, Rosy?" he said. "Go up at once and change your clothes. You must be wet through."

"I am all right, papa, and two such salmon; one took nearly two hours!"

"Up with you."

"Yes, Pardy. Don't forget to pay the man. He has been most capable and very thoughtful. I should like to keep him always."

"What fun!" thought the bowman.

"Need n't mind, sir. I can come down for it 'most any time."

"I have no change, Rose," said her father. "How much is it? Oh, a dollar, I think I said. Come down to-morrow, and ask the cook now to give you some tobacco."

"Thank you, sir, I does n't smoke—at present," he added to himself.

"Stop, papa!" cried Rose. "It is absurd to bring this poor fellow all the way back for a dollar. I have my portemonnaie." So saying, she searched it in the dark.

"Have you got it? Hurry, Rose. You will take cold. Bother the child. How persistent you are!"

Her fingers encountered only a bundle of notes of amounts not to be known in the gloom, and then, in a pocket apart, a little gold dollar—a luck-penny, kept for its rarity. She hesitated, but, being chilly and in haste, said, "Here is a dollar, my man. It is one of our old-fashioned gold dollars; but it is all right. I am very much obliged to you. If I want you again, can you come?"

"Maybe, ma'am. Depends on the lumber-boss."

"Well, good night."

"Good night, ma'am."

"Do come, Rose."

"That 's an odd sort of a man, Pardy," said the young woman, while the canoe sped away, and the odd sort of a man said:

"Set me ashore at the ox-path; no, at the brow above. I 'll walk up. I am soaked. I shall take Colkett's dugout and cross at my camp. Here 's another dollar, you old saint, and if ever you tell, I will scalp you!"

"All right, Mr. Carington."

"Well," exclaimed that gentleman, as he strode away, "if that was n't fun, there is n't decent cause left for a laugh in the universe." Then he lit a pipe, inspected by its dim light the gold dollar, and, smiling, carefully put it away in a safe pocket.

CHAPTER XI

HE transmutation of the emotions or the passions into one another is among the mysteries of the sphere of morals. In some natures, even the most sacred grief, the outcome of a child's death, I have seen capable of change into anger at a world in which such things are possible.

Susan had loved her sturdy little boy with unreasoning ardor, and indulged him to the utmost limit their scant means allowed. He had been like her in face, and this pleased her. He had, too, her masculine vigor, and seemed more bone of her bone than the two idiots who had gone early to the grave.

She sat just within the doorway, rocking. The chair creaked at each strong impulse of her foot. An oblong of sunshine lay at her feet, and in it a faded crape bonnet, last relic of a day when prosperity could afford to grief a uniform. It had turned up in her vain search after a decent garment for the dead. As she continued to rock with violence, the loose planks of the floor moving, a toy ark, the gift of Dorothy to the boy, fell from a shelf. Noah and his maimed beasts tumbled out, and lay on their sides in the sun. She took no note of the scattered menagerie.

The room was in no worse than its usual disarray, with no sign of that terrible precision which we associate with the death-chamber. At last she rose quickly, and, pushing the toys and bonnet aside with an impatient foot, left the rocking-chair in motion, and trod heavily up and down the room, opening and shutting her hands as she walked. She fed her rage with each look she cast on her dead boy.

A far gentler woman once said to me that there was for her in her child's death the brutality of insult. Some such feeling was now at work with Susan Colkett.

In her younger life she had lived on a farm in upper Canada, a tall, pretty, slim girl, quick of tongue, unruly, and with an undeveloped and sensual liking for luxury and ease. Then she married a man well enough off to have given her a comfortable life. A certain incapacity to see consequences, with that form of fearlessness which is without fear until the results of action or inaction are too evident, led her to be careless of debts. Then her husband drank, and grew weary of her tornadoes of unreasoning anger; the idiot children came, and she began to think of what even yet she might realize for herself if he were dead. Making no effort to stop him, she let him go his way, seeing without one restraining word the growth of a deadly habit. Dorothy had said that she helped his downward course even more actively. His death left her penniless, but free. Men were unwilling, however, to face her wild temper, and when, at last, her looks were fast fading, to help the only things in the world she cared for, she took the

stout little man who had for her from his youth an unchanging affection. Misfortune taught her no good lessons. Even now she hated work, loved ease, and lacked imagination to picture consequences. Amidst the animal distress her child's death occasioned, she was still capable of entertaining the thought of crime; in fact, her loss contributed a new impulse in the storm of fury it evoked. They were close to the end of their resources. There is in Paris a Place St. Opportune. Who this saint was, I know not. His biography might be of interest. There is probably a fallen angel of the same name who makes the paths of virtue slippery. Crime had been near to this woman for years, and ever nearer since disaster had been a steady companion. She had lacked opportunity, and that alone. Nor was this the only time she had cast temptation in the way of her simple-minded husband.

At last, as, striding to and fro, she went by the doorway, she saw Dorothy, and with her a thin man in shining, much-worn, black alpaca clothing.

She knew at once that he was the preacher who had been brought up from Mackenzie to bury her child.

Upon this she turned back into the room, and stood a moment by the two chairs on which lay the pine box which Joe had made. The little fellow within it had been hardly changed by his brief illness. He was fair to see; white, and strongly modeled; and now he was beautiful with the double refinements of youth and death. She touched his cheek as if to test the reality of death, and then

kissed him, and, laying over him the rude cover, turned away.

At the door she met Dorothy and the minister. Dorothy said, "Good morning, Susan."

"You 've been a heap of time comin'."

Dorothy, glancing at Mrs. Colkett, did not enter, but stepped to one side and, leaning against the log wall, waited. The little man in the worn alpaca suit was stopped as he turned to go in by the gaunt form of his hostess.

"There ain't no need to go in or to preach," she said.

Upon this Dorothy plucked at his coat-skirt, and, much embarrassed, he fell back, saying, "That 's as friends please."

Then Joe came from the cow-shed and went in past his wife. As he went by, he nodded cheerfully to Dorothy and to the preacher. "'Most ready; won't be long."

Mrs. Colkett stood looking across the clearing. The preacher, uneasily moving to and fro, at last approached her again. "My sister," he said, "the hand of the Lord has been heavy on this household of his people." From her great height Susan Colkett cast her eyes down on the wan little person below her. "It is fit," he went on, "that while —"

"Look here," said Susan; "you 've come to bury that child, and that 's all you 're here for. Just set down and wait"; and so saying, she brought out two crippled chairs.

Dorothy said, "No, I will stand."

The preacher sat down without a word, and found

occupation in keeping his place, as the chair-legs bored unequally into the soft soil. At last, greatly troubled, he looked toward Dorothy for consolation, and, receiving none, at last fell on his knees in deep despair. "Oh, Lord!" he cried, "move the heart of this woman that she may receive the message of thy grace!" and on this Dory too knelt in the sunshine, while Susan turned and went into the house.

Then there arose within the rude noise of loud hammering, and, utterly confused, the unhappy preacher looked up, and saw that he was alone with Dorothy.

"What manner of people are these?" he said, as they both arose. "I must speak to her," and he moved toward the door.

"I would n't," said Dorothy, touching his coat. "Not now. Another time."

He said no more, and the pair stayed without, waiting with no further words, while the hammering went on. At last it ceased. Joe came out, wringing a finger. "I kind of mashed it," he said, in an explanatory voice. "Susie 's ready." He went back, and soon came out again with the white box held in front of him on his two outstretched arms.

The mother followed, looking straight before her — a strange, high-colored, set face, the tightly shut jaw making hard lines in the lower cheek-curves. The meager preacher came after with a book in his hand, and Dorothy followed.

In the woods Joe stumbled once, and a moment after set down his strange burden and wrung his hurt finger. Then he went on again into the deeper

woodland, and about two hundred yards from the house stopped and set the box on a level stump. Before them were two crumbled mounds of earth, and beyond a small open grave, not over-deep.

The clergyman came forward.

"I might put it in?" said Joe, interrogatively.

"Yes," said Dorothy. "Let me help." And, taking the coffin at each end, they let it down, for the grave was shallow.

"Them roots is in the way; they bothered me when I was a-diggin'," said Joe.

"Hush!" exclaimed Dorothy. "Hush!"

As they stood up, the minister went on to read his simple burial service. Susan Colkett paid, or seemed to pay, intense attention. At last he ceased, and all stood still a moment in the deep wood-shadows, for the twilight was near at hand. There was a little stir as Dorothy took from her handkerchief a handful of roses and let them fall into the open grave. Susan looked at her a moment, and then, turning to the preacher, said, coldly:

"Is that all of it? I don't want none left out."

"Yes."

"Don't rich people have no more said than that?"

"No; that is all," he replied, much astonished. "Would n't you like me to talk to you at the house?"

"No, I would n't. My man he 'll pay you." And she walked away. The minister wiped his brow, and sat down on a stump, while Dorothy waited, and Joe calmly began to fill up the little grave.

He paused once to give the minister the cost of his journey, and then went on,

"Come," said Mrs. Maybrook. "No; don't go in," she added, as they passed the cabin. "Let her alone."

"The Lord has made my errand hard," he said.

"No; he has n't took a hand in the matter at all," she said. "It 's the devil! Come!" And they disappeared in the darkening wood-spaces.

Before Joe had quite done, he was aware of his wife again standing beside him.

"What 's wrong?" he said. "Best wait in the house. I 'll come. And don't bother none for the supper. I 'll cook it."

"Could n't you set a board over the boy?" she said.

"Yes."

"They 're just buried like dead dogs!"

"I 'll git somethin'."

"What 's the use, anyhow? If you were any good of a man, there 'd be a decent white stone like them Lyndsays has set."

"Oh, I 'll find somethin', Susie! I 'll think about it." He was anxious to get through with it all, and somewhere deep in his mind was moved by her want.

"It ain't no use thinking," she said, "when you 've got no money." And so, at last, she went away once more to the wretchedness they called home, leaving him to complete his task.

It was now dusk. He sat down on a log, and wiped his brow with his sleeve. There was a little tobacco left in his pouch. He lit a pipe, and sat awhile in dull rumination, like some slow ox, recalling her words. At last he took the pipe out of his mouth, and stood up, as one set on the clear track of an idea. A difficulty occurred to him.

"I 'll do it. No one won't know. There don't nobody come here." A moment later a new obstacle arose is his mind, and he resumed his pipe and his seat.

"That 'll do," he said. "I 'll get Dory to help. She won't think for to suspect none." And so, much cheered by the prospect of pleasing his wife, he went away to the cow-shed.

His had been a poor, loveless life. An orphan boy, he had never possessed ability or power to win affection or respect for anything except his muscles. Yet a canine capacity to love without question was in him, and the tall, gaunt woman who alone had put out a hand of apparent trust to him had all of his simple attachment.

Now he extinguished his pipe, knocked it on a tree to shake out the live ashes, put it in his pocket decisively, and went back to the house.

He had a sense of satisfaction in the notion that he would surprise his wife with fulfilment of her desires: also he felt surprise, and as much elation as he was capable of, at his own skill in seeing his way through this enterprise. What she, the poor hurt mother, wanted was now in single possession of a mind little able to transact mental business with more than one importunate creditor at a time.

To take what is not your own is common enough. The higher criminal mind disposes of the matter with some sophistry as to the right to have a share in the unjust excess of another's property. The utterly immoral nature gives it no thought, save how to act with safety. The lowest type of man is untroubled

as to the ethics of thieving, and as little as to personal results. The idea that another might suffer in proportion to what his own wife would gain never passed the threshold of this poor fellow's consciousness. What he was about to do seemed to him easy and safe. He was certain that Susie would like it, and would think him more of a man. And that was all.

CHAPTER XII

R. LYNDSAY, as we now know, came back without having seen Mr. Carington. His purpose was, however, unchanged. Yet, as there was no immediate need to act, and no present danger, he concluded to wait, quite sure that the two gentlemen on whom he had called must, when they returned his courtesy, give him an easy chance to say to Carington what he had heard. Thus having decided what to do, and that delay involved no possibility of mischief, he put it all aside for the time.

Meanwhile, the Island Camp was the scene of amusing debate. The next morning, as they lay on their tent mattresses and smoked that most blissful first love of the day, the after-breakfast pipe, Ellett took up the talk of the night before.

"I told you that you would get in a scrape."

"It was n't that. 'My lands!' as Mrs. Maybrook says, what a noble adventure! If I only could do it again! No, I don't repent. Far from it; I would like to do it again. It was just too altogether delicious, as the girls say."

"But you will have to call. Mr. Lyndsay has been to see you, and go to see him you must, if I have to carry you!"

"But I can't and I won't! I am a bad boy. Just now it is all a beautiful and adventurous dream. I don't want to see that woman again—ever. It would spoil the romance of it. Go yourself. You can drop down in mid-morning. No one will be in. Leave my card on the table."

"What stuff, Fred! You can't get out of it. Mr. Lyndsay wants to see you. He called on you, not on me."

"But I don't want to see him. Imagine my having to explain and apologize, and fetch the whole thing down to the dreary level of prose. I am ill; I am dead; I shall go home—anything!"

He was at his high level of reckless enjoyment of a delightful indiscretion, and a part of his delight lay in the distress it occasioned his soberly conventional friend. He was himself, in truth, a graver man than Ellett, but took into his work as a successful engineer the same gaiety which ran riot in his holiday hours. It had its value with the men who did work under his eyes, and helped him and them over some hard places. At need he became instantly a cool, watchful, cautious man, with the bearing and reserve of middle life. To those who saw him only in his utter abandonment of glee, ready as a boy for any merry enterprise, and by no means disliking it the more if it brought physical risks, it was hardly conceivable that he should be, back of all this, a man of strong opinions, political and religious, of definite views, and of an almost fantastic sense of honor.

"Can't you be decently quiet a moment, and think a little?"

"Don't want to," returned Carington. "Git away wid ye! You are like Eve: you want to introduce a knowledge of good and evil into this Eden of mine. Go, fish and let me alone. I want to dream it over: that scene in the wood, the rain, the wild orange, light for a minute, that copper-head saint. It was really great, Oliver! Beats the Bowery Theater! And, oh!— I forgot to tell you. She told her pa I was such a good bowman! — so thoughtful! and could n't she have me always? Always, Oliver! The bliss of that!"

"I don't see how you can see anything amusing in it, Fred. It is n't as if this was some common New York girl, with a boarding-school civilization. Now that 's a rather neat phrase, 'a boarding-school civilization.'"

"Is it? What else?"

"Nothing. I only meant to say these Lyndsays are gentlefolk, and won't be very well pleased."

"You old idiot! Do you suppose I don't know that? Put your brains to work. Here am I at the end of the first volume of a lovely romance; situation entirely novel. I wish to stop there; the second and third volumes are sure to fall off dismally. The problem is, how not to go on; or, if I must, how to drop from poetry to prose."

"I should think you must have dropped pretty distinctly when Mr. Lyndsay paid you; I suppose he did."

"Sir, I was paid in gold of the Bank of Spain — in coin no longer current — by the woman herself."

"Would you kindly interpret?"

"I will"; and he told the scene on the beach.

"Let me see that gold dollar."

"See it! Not I. No profane eyes shall —"

"Stuff and nonsense! She will very likely want it back. Probably it was a luck-penny."

"Very like. I shall keep it for luck. You are an iconoclast of dreams. Let 's go and kill fish. I have been trying to divide my enchanted mood with you. It has been a dismal failure. The fact is, I know as well as you — and a blank sight better — that this is a lady, that these are nice people, and that I am in a scrape. But to-day they may all go to the deuce and the bow-wows. 'Let the great world spin forever, down the ringing grooves of change.' He must have meant a railway. I never thought of that before. Don't bother. I 'll go and call some day. Come, let 's kill salmon." And they went to their canoes.

While this dreadful thing was agitating Mr. Ellett's mind, it was also receiving due consideration at the breakfast-table of the Cliff Camp.

Rose Lyndsay, despite remonstrance, had been sent at once to bed on her return, and supplied with hot tea and more substantial diet, and ordered to go to sleep. Next to being wicked through and through, to be wet through and through was, to Mrs. Lyndsay's mind, one of the most serious of human catastrophes. She was gently positive, and so Rose lay very wide-awake, and considered at ease the events of a most agreeable day, until, thinking with a little regret of her luck-penny, she fell asleep, only to wake up with the sunlight streaming in as her mother

opened the curtains, and to hear the pervasive voices of the boys singing under her window:

Up in the mornin' 's nae for me!

"Overslept yourself, Rose!"

"Are you dry yet?"

"That salmon is only thirty pounds. You awful fraud!"

"All right, dear, to-day?" were the salutations of the noisy table, as she distributed her morning kisses, and at last sat down.

"One at a time," she replied. "Fair play, boys. First, I am nearly dry. Second, salmon always loses weight."

"I have noticed that," laughed her father. "Tell us all about it, my dear." And upon this she related the adventures of the previous day.

"I must have my luck-penny," she added. "I was a goose to give it away, but I was so cold and wet, and I was in such a hurry. I hated to send the man away without a cent."

"It is odd that he took it," said Anne.

"Yes," returned her brother. "These fellows are sharp enough about their pay and about money; and he could n't have known what he was taking. These coins circulate no longer, even in the States. He never said a word, but merely put it in his pocket. What sort of a fellow is he, Rose?"

"It is so hard to describe people."

"It is impossible," said Anne, "even on a passport."

"Not quite. Tall, and curly hair — very curly hair."

"That 's satisfactory, Rose," remarked Jack.

"I had not done. Oh, what I thought strange was the man's manner. Now and then he spoke as if he was talking to an equal, and really he has a voice quite full of pleasant tones. The next minute he talked like Thunder Tom, or worse."

"I must ask Carington about him. By the way, I was right as to Ellett. He is a son of my old companion. I fancy they will be here to-day or to-morrow. If this present Oliver is like his father, he will be solid, stolid,—a rock of good sense."

"I don't want him, Marcus Aurelius, nor the other. For a first-class B. O. I prefer my young man of the gold dollar. But I must have it again. I am not at all sure now that honesty is the best policy. When you see Mr. Carington, Pardy, do ask about the man. He seemed quite above his class. Ned, I cannot wait for you to finish your interminable meal."

"I think he just chews for exercise," said Dick. "Might arrange, if the meat was tough enough, to keep his appetite up all the time. Would n't that be fine, Ned?"

"I don't think any of my boys require artificial aid," said Mrs. Lyndsay. "Dugald Dalgetty was a trifler to you."

"I have n't got to the fish yet, and it 's my own salmon," said the boy, helping himself.

"We want to have Rose to-day," said Dick, between mouthfuls. "I want her to go up to the brook. There 's a marsh there, and Drosera — oh, lots! It 's far north for it, too."

"What is Drosera, Dicky?"

"Fly-trap; and there are some purple orchids."

"For this once I will compromise," said Anne. "I want to see Archie kill a salmon. If you will assure me of Rose to-morrow afternoon, you may have her to-day."

"And I am to take care of myself," said her brother. "I never hear of compromises without thinking of Dr. North's illustration. I must have told you, Margaret."

"If you ever did, I have forgotten."

Stories were pretty often retold in this household, and it was the way to consider them as guests to be made welcome, no matter how often they came.

Lyndsay smiled. "Two Germans, who were North's patients, built houses together and adjoining. Then each of them bought paint enough to paint both houses; one chose green and one a fine brick-red. This ended in a quarrel. Dr. North advised them to consult their priest, and this they did. He said, 'Shust you make a gompromise, and migs de baints.' So this was done, and neither got what he wanted. This is of the essence of all compromise."

"But I shall get what I want," said Anne.

"And we, too!" cried the boys. "We will take Rose and lunch and Big Tom, and Pierre and you can have the Indian, father."

"And his lame bowman, if he be well enough," added Lyndsay. "Thanks."

"And I shall take my rifle," said Dick.

"No, unless you go alone," said Lyndsay.

"All right; we 'll fish for trout, Rose," cried Jack.

Lyndsay, who had quietly watched the proceedings on the shore.

"They are delightful."

"You have no responsibility for them, my dear sister. You know what Marcus Aurelius says: 'Irresponsibility arises from an unphilosophical indifference to—to—'"

"Consequences," cried Anne, laughing. "You worry too much over the boys, Archie. I mean it. You take them too seriously. Permit me to say you are too consequentitious."

"What a word! Did you make it? I can't help worrying. I am always thinking of what their future will be. One should give some thought to the morrow, and other people's morrows are the real difficulty."

"See Marcus Aurelius, chapter third," said Anne, maliciously. "'To-morrow is only a stranger; when he is to-day consider how thou shalt entertain him.'"

"That is not my way, Anne." And he left her, saying, "Jack is the one I fear for most."

"I least," said Anne to herself. "I shall not be here to see, whatever, as Tom says." Then she sat down to her book about the Council of Trent, and by and by varied it with a little tough work on Cædmon's Anglo-Saxon riddles, smiling as she read,—a good, half-dozen kind of smiles, of which she alone had the secret.

By and by came Margaret Lyndsay and sat down, her knitting-needles clicking, until Anne's unlucky nervousness, kept in hand with difficulty, was viciously alive. At last Mrs. Lyndsay laid aside her work with

a certain deliberation, for those who knew her best a signal of serious moment. She said, "You won't mind, dear, if I say something I have had on my mind?"

"I? Oh, no! What is it?"

"I sometimes think, dear, that the endless trivialities into which you and Archibald lead those boys are not, dear, a good thing. I have spoken to Archibald about it, and he quite agrees with me. I sometimes think Archibald agrees with me too easily. I would rather he argued the matter; but he is so apt to say, 'Certainly, Margaret!' and then to go and smoke. I do wish you would consider it seriously. And you are so capable of wiser and more instructive talk. You won't mind what I say, dear?"

"My dear Margaret," replied Anne, with some irritation, "shall we converse about the Council of Trent? Also the enigmas of Cædmon are instructive; the manners and customs of the Angles are stated there in a manner to combine interest with amusement, instruction with perplexity."

"Why do you answer me in that way? You always do. Anne, you are too bad! You know well enough what I mean."

"Yes, I know," she said, a little wearily. "I think you are hardly just. You see only one side of things. At all events, the whole logic of the situation is this: When you have a headache, you go to bed and dose yourself, and put stuff on your temples; when I am in pain from head to foot,—I was at breakfast,—I go merry mad and say things. You will have to stand it, unless I go away."

"Oh, Anne! How can you hurt me so? Go away?"

"I spoke hastily: I don't mean that. But sometimes, Margaret, you so completely fail to comprehend me that I feel I had better be away. You can never change me."

"But you — you could change yourself."

"Could I, indeed? And trust me, Margaret, I shall go on as gay, as inconsequent, as merry; but if I can teach, if anything in my life teaches these boys to laugh when they might cry, I shall not have lived in vain. I am sure we are all grave enough at times. When I go wild, and say absurd things, pity me. A jest is my smelling-salts; a joke is my medicine. Believe me — oh, it is true: the custom of laughter is good."

"But this constant amusement at everything — yes, everything!"

"There is quite enough that is serious, even now, in these young lives. The laugh of a fool is as the crackling of thorns, and heats no water in the pot; but the grin of the wise boils the kettle of wisdom. There!"

The illustration was unhappy.

"I think, dear, you might put Scripture to wiser use than to twist it into a defense of this perpetual levity. It seems strange to me that you cannot see these things as I see them."

"Better to give me up as a hopeless case. I shall laugh till I die, and if afterward the supply gives out I shall feel glad that I neglected no reasonable chance on earth."

"There is a time for all things, Anne, and sometimes —"

"Yes, I know. Only we differ as to the times. I think, now, I must go in and rest a little."

This was the usual end of their discussions. Anne was mentally victor, but physically defeated. "Yes, I am sure that will be best." Upon this Anne went away with a smile that was not quite pleasant. In her room she stood a moment and then said, "D. A. M! I think that is good French. The Lord deliver us from the gentle!" and so fell in a heap on the bed, with set teeth and very white.

CHAPTER XIII

MEANWHILE the overladen canoe went away up the river. "And now, boys," said Rose, "this is my day, and there must be no quarrels. We are pretty well packed in one canoe, and I will have only sunshine and good temper. And do sit still. Remember what the wise man said:

> Three Irishmen of Timbuctoo,
> They went to sea in a birch canoe.
> They kicked up such a hullabaloo
> That they never got back to Timbuctoo.

Remember that, boys."

"Oh!" said Ned. "I know a better one—

> There was a young man of Siam,
> As occasionally murmured a damn!
> Monotonous virtue
> Is certain to hurt you;
> So he swallowed a taciturn clam."

"What nonsense!" cried Rose.

"That 's good about monotonous virtue," said Jack. "A whole day and no row!"

"Not one," said Rose.

"Why, Rose, if a fellow don't fight somebody, what 's to become of him?"

"I guess we are n't any less brave than the Romans," remarked Ned, sententiously. "If you gemini had a hornets' nest to fight every day, you would let me alone. I hate to fight."

"Oh! There 's a nice fat fib."

"I do. I had to eat dinner standing up for two days after that scrimmage."

"Yes, little peaceful man!" said Jack. "Tell us a story, Rose. It 's an hour to the brook."

"Very well. Once on a time there was a princess. She was terribly rich, and as pretty —"

"As you," said Ned.

"No interruptions, sir! She was very beautiful, and very, very hard to satisfy. A great many lovers came to ask her to marry them. None of them pleased her, but so many came that to save trouble she wrote a big 'No!' on her visiting cards, and gave every man one as he came in, and this saved a great deal of trouble. When there were no more lovers left in the world but only three, she began to be afraid she would never get married at all. So she tore up her cards, and was polite to these three. Their names were Hurdy-Gurdy and Trombone and Mandolin. At length her father said she must make up her mind. At first she thought she would draw lots, but by and by she resolved to marry the most courageous of the three."

"Oh!" exclaimed Jack, "I like that."

"One day they were all four walking by the river, and, as if by accident, she fell in. 'Oh, dear!' she

cried, 'I shall drown.' Then Hurdy-Gurdy sat down and began to whittle a shingle; but Trombone jumped in, and, as she flopped about a great deal, he was like to drown himself. Then in jumped Mandolin, and pulled them both out by the hair.

"Then all three spread themselves in the sun, to dry. And the princess said, 'Now, which *is* the most courageous?'

"Trombone cried, 'I! Because I dashed in to save you, without hesitation.'

"'But,' said Mandolin, 'you did not save her. I pulled you both out.'

"'I was first,' said Trombone.

"'Certainly!' said the princess, which her name was Henrietta, and she was so called because she was fond of algebra, and preferred even an improper fraction to the most virtuous of men. Said she, 'What good was your courage, if it only served to drown us both? You are neither of you as brave as me.'"

"Oh!" cried Ned.

"They always speak bad grammar in fairy-land, because it is romantic, and because then the young princesses can be sure that the princes are thinking more of them than of the mere choice of words."

"Guess Jack would have a fine chance!" said Ned.

"Don't interrupt me. Where was I? Oh!

"'You are neither of you as brave as me, because I have to marry one of you, and that is an act of courage of which a man is incapable. Also, I can't swim, but I fell in so as to see which of you is the bravest. I fell in! Trombone jumped in! Mandolin leaped in!'

"'But I saved you!' said Mandolin.

"'A mere question of brute skill,' urged Trombone. 'It is braver to jump in when you can't swim than when you can.'

"'It is very puzzling,' cried Henrietta. 'The personal equation—'"

"I know what that is," cried Ned.

"Shut up, old wisdom! Go ahead, Rosy Posy."

"'It is a question in the rule of three. As Trombone is to Mandolin, so is me to the answer.'

"'That leaves me out,' said Hurdy-Gurdy.

"'You stayed out!' cried Mandolin, with scorn.

"'I don't see my way,' said the princess. 'Let Mandolin be B, and Hurdy-Gurdy C, and I am—'

"'B, C puts them both out of the question,' said Trombone. 'They are dead.'"

"Sancho Panza!" cried Ned. "What fine nonsense!"

"Do keep quiet," said Jack.

"'And me—I—oh, bother!' said Henrietta. 'It comes out even.'

"'But,' said Hurdy-Gurdy, 'it is heart-rending what I suffered. I alone had the courage not to jump in. I had the courage of my opinion, which was that I should be drowned, and so break your heart. I really could n't. There are three hundred and twenty-one kinds of courage.'

" Gracious! How numerically interesting!' said Henrietta. 'Dry yourselves, and I will reflect.'

"So she left the three seated on the bank, in the sun, and went away. But once a year she sent her maid to see if they were dry, and to say she was

water, as the bear, fiercely growling, began to move toward them. As for Jack, he was away around the boulder, and in an instant upon top, the young bear giving him a smart nip, as he stood on the summit, flushed, resolute, and laughing.

"Fling it down!" cried Ned, with good sense. But Jack was otherwise minded, hardly taking in the peril for Rose and Ned. Dick had dashed into the wood, calling wildly to the men.

"Let it go!" cried Rose. Then there was a loud cry from the river:

"Drop it, you fool!"

"Not I!" cried Jack. "Run, Rose; he 'll go for me. Run! run!"

As he spoke, the savage bruin reared herself up in a vain effort to climb the smooth stone. Jack, on the boulder, laughed, as he balanced himself with difficulty, owing to the struggles of the cub. Seeing that to climb was impossible, the bear proceeded to make a flank movement, which would have enabled her to follow Jack up the back of the rock. The boy was in no way alarmed. But now he saw that Rose was in the path of the bear, and that Ned, white as death, was standing between Rose and the enraged mother, a canoe-pole in one hand, and the other motioning back at Rose, as he called to her to "Run! run!"

Just as Jack, appalled at these unlooked-for consequences, was about to part with his precious captive, a voice rang out again from the river: "Run! run! Quick!"

Ned cast a glance behind him, and, catching Rose's

hand, pulled at her so violently, as he threw the pole aside, that she lost her balance and fell, striking heavily on a corner of rock. Ned cast himself down beside her. Instantly a rifle rang out from the river behind them. As they lay, he heard the shrill "ping" of a rifle-ball above him, and the bear rolled dead on her side, clean shot through the head.

Jack leaped from the boulder, still holding on to the cub, and made toward Rose, as the men and Dick came out in haste from the wood onto the beach. Carington sprang into the water before his canoe touched the land, crying to Jack:

"Back there, you infernal young idiot!" With his rifle ready, he pushed the boy aside and advanced cautiously but swiftly, until he saw that the beast was dead. Next he turned to Rose, who lay motionless on the beach. As the group of faces, still wild with scare or excitement, gathered around him, he knelt, lifted the girl, and, seeing a thin thread of blood leaping in little jets from her temple, he set her head against his knee and put a finger on the wound, saying:

"Get me water. It is not so bad. Good Lord! It might have been worse!"

"Is she dead?" said Ned.

"Dead? No, my boy—not she."

He wet his handkerchief and washed the blood off her face, still keeping a finger above the cut on the artery, as he gave directions to Tom to make a pad from Ned's handkerchief. With this and his own tied tightly around her head, he was able easily to check the bleeding. Meanwhile the rest stood still,

recognizing the competence of the improvised surgeon.

"That will do," he said, looking at her as he knelt, and letting her head rest on a cushion from the canoe. "I think she has only fainted."

"Oh!" cried Jack, "I was afraid— Be still, you beast!" to the writhing cub. Carington gave him a look, and again considered the fair, young face beneath his gaze, the blood on neck and dress, and the red splashes on his own attire.

"That is better," he exclaimed, for Rose opened her eyes, looked about, confused for a moment; then rallied her faculties, and said, feebly:

"What is it? Where am I? What has happened?"

"It is all right. You fell down."

"Oh, Fairfield! Is that you? Where is Ned?"

"I 'm here."

"And Jack?"

"Oh, I 'm all right! And the bear 's dead."

"The bear? Yes, I know now. Dead?"

"Mr. Carington shot him," said Ned.

"Mr. Carington? Where is he?" cried Rose, sitting up, and still a little dazed.

"Keep quiet, boys," said the young man. "Back a little. Take that cub away, sir. Can you stand, Miss Lyndsay? Here, take a little brandy from my flask. The explanations can wait. Why, you are quite strong. Now, then. Don't look at the bear; come." And he supported her to the canoe, talking as he went, to keep her from questioning.

"Now, then,"—turning to Jack,—"you must wait here, sir. You can go in Tom's boat with Miss Lynd-

say"— this to Ned. "I will go ahead and explain at the camp. Don't let Miss Lyndsay talk."

"But, Fairfield," said Rose, "I must—"

"You are better, I think. There, that will do," as she was laid in the canoe. "If you talk, you will start the bleeding. Not a word now."

This was a somewhat masterful person, and Rose, as she lay back against the cushions, was satisfied to shut her eyes and obey, weak, and still tingling with past excitement.

"You shall know everything by and by, Miss Lyndsay."

"Thanks!" she murmured, and her canoe put off.

"I will overtake you," he said, and then walked back and took a look at the bear, which Jack, now reassured, was attentively regarding.

"A first-rate shot that was!" said the boy.

Carington made no reply. Then, glancing at the bear: "Poor old mother!" he said. "A sucking bear! I am sorry I had to kill you."

"You 'll send for me soon?" said Jack.

Carington again failed to reply.

"Is n't there room in your boat?"

"Not for you." He was very angry. Jack sat down with his troublesome captive, feeling that he had been sharply snubbed; and the canoe fled away in the track of Rose's boat. As he passed her, Carington cried out:

"Are you all right?"

"Yes, thank you!"

"Well, don't talk." And his birch went by at speed, he himself taking a third paddle to gain time.

"By George! My little comedy came near to a tragic ending. How Ellett will rate me! What a mess!" And he considered a moment his bloody knickerbockers and stained stockings.

"Your face is all over blood," said Michelle. "Best wash, sir. Might scare 'em worse than a bear."

"That is so." Ceasing to paddle, he took the boat sponge, and made a hasty toilet.

"Am I clean, Michelle?"

"Well—pretty fair, sir. You are right well painted. It was awful lucky you took a mind to try for a shot at that other seal."

"Yes. Shove her along!" He took the paddle again, and fell to thinking, until they came to the beach. There was no one in sight. He ran up the steps, noticing that there was one canoe on the shore. Then he paused, and, returning, called Tom.

"Go up and tell Mr. Lyndsay I want to see him."

Presently Mr. Lyndsay came down the steps.

"Mr. Carington!" And he stayed a moment, surprised at the appearance of the blood-stained man. "What is it?" he said. "Anything wrong?"

"Miss Lyndsay has had a slight accident. She is all right now. I came on ahead to tell you. It is really—really not serious. They were scared by a bear on the beach. I was lucky enough to kill it, but, in trying to escape, your daughter fell and struck her head, and—oh, it bled a bit. Oh, here is the canoe."

Rose, freshened by the air and motion, got up, laughing, and ran to her father.

"Rose, my dear! Rose!" he cried.

"Where is mother? Does she know? It is n't anything, Pardy." Then she looked at his companion, who presented a sufficiently soiled and untidy appearance to still perplex her.

"Fairfield," she exclaimed, "where is—"

"I am Mr. Carington," he returned, smiling, and a little embarrassed. Lyndsay looked on bewildered.

"But—"

"Never mind, Miss Lyndsay. I owe you an apology for playing bowman for a half-day."

"Indeed!" cried Rose, flushing, and, turning away, went up the steps. She hesitated half-way, remembering the bear, and then went on and entered the house.

"One moment, Mr. Carington!" exclaimed her father. "Wait for me." And he hurried after her. In a few minutes the scared mother was made to understand the matter, and, reassured, busied herself in seeing Rose safely to bed.

CHAPTER XIV

RCHIBALD LYNDSAY went down to the beach again, where Carington, not very happy, sat waiting on the stern of his canoe. He rose as his host came near.

"This way," said Lyndsay. "And now"—as they walked to and fro on the upper shingles—"may I ask you to let me understand it all?"

Carington quietly related the scene on the shore, omitting nothing. When he had ended, Lyndsay said:

"I have probably to thank you for a life which is very dear to me. I have no words in which to say what I feel. We are very deep in your debt."

"Oh, any one would—"

"No—I understand. You are a little like myself, I fancy. To have too much obliged another has its embarrassments. I won't ask you now to let my wife say her own thankfulness; but come and breakfast to-morrow, and bring Mr. Ellett."

"With pleasure."

"By the way—and you will pardon me—what was all that about Fairfield and a bowman?"

"Simply, Mr. Lyndsay, that I am still, in my holi-

day times, a bit of a foolish boy, and when Polycarp came up for a man and could get none, I supposed it was for you, and just as a frolic induced him to let me play bowman. I had, of course, not the remotest idea that it was for Miss Lyndsay. May I ask you to accept for her my most humble apologies?"

"I see," said Lyndsay, laughing. "It has its amusing side."

"Yes, but— Well, it ceased to be amusing when I realized the annoyance it might bring to Miss Lyndsay."

"I dare say you will be able to make your peace," said his host, as Carington took his hand. At the boat, to which he walked with the elder man, he paused:

"May I say a word to that boy of yours?"

"To Ned? Yes, certainly." He called, "Ned! Halloa! Come here!" for the lad had gone up to the cabin with Rose.

"Coming," cried Ned, from the porch, where, with Anne, he was trying to make a good case for Jack.

Meanwhile, as Lyndsay was ordering a boat up to Jack, Ned came down to the strand.

"Mr. Carington wished to see you," said Lyndsay. "Good-by, and breakfast at half-past eight to-morrow"; and so, with ready tact, he went up the cliff, leaving Ned with Carington.

"I wanted to see you a moment, Ned, while the matter is fresh. I want to say that I saw the whole affair on the shore. I was but thirty yards away. Perhaps you won't think it a liberty, my lad, if I say you behaved admirably, and kept your wits, too.

You showed both good sense and courage." He spoke as if he were addressing an equal.

Ned flushed with pleasure. "Oh, thank you!"

"That 's all. I think you and I shall be friends after this. You must come up and see me; we might kill a salmon. Good-by." And he pushed off.

Ned stood a moment, in his thoughtful way, and then went back up the steps to Miss Anne, who was now at ease as to Rose, and well pleased with her dearest nephew.

"What was it?" she inquired.

"Oh, not much — nothing."

"I think I know."

"No!"

"Yes; he wanted to say you had behaved well."

"Oh, bother, Aunt Anne! What 's the use of your asking, if you know? You always do know."

Then Ned went away, and Archibald Lyndsay came out and strode uneasily up and down the porch.

"Archie," said Anne. "Brother."

"Well, what is it?"

"Are you troubled?"

"Yes, of course. How should I be other than troubled?"

"But why?"

"Why? Jack has behaved like a selfish, thoughtless —"

"No; he is not at bottom selfish. Thoughtless — yes; and he has the vices of his virtues. He is so bold, and so resolute in action — so enjoys the peril he creates. Can't you see what such a character wants?

You may rest assured, my dear Archie, that he is quite enough punished."

"He is incidentally punished."

"But—"

"I don't want to hear any more, Anne. He has behaved like a blackguard."

"No."

"Confound the women!" he said, and walked away; but in an hour was at the shore to meet Jack, who landed a little dismayed, his grunting cub still expostulating in the only language known to juvenile bears.

"Well, sir! I have heard this agreeable story!"

"But, father—"

"I should think you might be fatigued!"

Now, a good kicking would have been preferred by any of these boys to the father's sarcasm.

"Go up to the house, undress, and go to bed. I don't want to see you for a day. No words, sir, or I shall lose my temper. Off with you—you are not fit to associate with gentlemen."

Without a word more, Jack went up the steps and did as he was told; in consequence of which Margaret wept a little, and Anne, who thought on the whole that Jack had gotten off better than she expected, betook herself to her books, with a full determination to have it out with the boy in her own way, and at a later date.

It was well into the afternoon when Carington reached his camp, and found Ellett still away on the river.

"I shall catch it!" said Fred, with a grin at the prospect. He made use of the interval to change his clothes and get rid of the stained garments, after which he ordered a smudge, pulled open the tent-flaps, and cast himself on the camp mattress, for the first time realizing that he was tired, or, at least, had that sense of languor which follows upon intense excitement. The tent-fly was up—the triangular space thus open to view framed prettily the beach, the men and canoes, the river, and the hills beyond. The smoke of the cedar-smudge at times dimmed the picture. At last, being absolutely comfortable, the cushions just right, the midge and black fly routed, he carefully filled and lit his pipe, reflecting, as he did so, on the varied value of tobacco, which he had never misused. Next he sought in one pocket after another, until he came upon a worn note-book. Among its scraps of verse and memoranda he found the well-known apostrophe of El Din Attar to the pipe. He read it with a smile.

"'O wife of the soul, thou art wiser than any who bide in the harem. A maker of peace thou art and a builder of prudence between temptation and the hour of decision. Can anger abide with the pipe, or a gnat in the smoke of the tent-fire? Lo, wine is but wine for the simple, and a pipe but a pipe for the foolish; and what is a song to the dumb, or a rose to the eye that is blind? A bud of the rose findeth June on the breast of the dark-eyed; a song must be sung by the heart of the hearer. And thus are the pipe and the smoker. Also of it the king hath no more joy than the beggar, saith El Din Attar.'

"A pipe is a pipe, and a rose is a rose, be it prim or not," said the happy young fellow, laughing. "There is no new wisdom. To think what Wordsworth would have said to that! If Hamlet could have played upon this pipe, would he have been nicer to Ophelia?" His own meerschaum had been a friendly counselor at times. "Gracious!" he laughed outright —a good sign of a man that he can soliloquize laughter—"if I should fall in love, and the woman hate tobacco!" He let his fancy wander, and began to reflect, lazily, and yet with some curiosity, on the person he had saved from a serious, if not fatal, calamity. "I got out of that comedy pretty well," he said to himself. "But, by George! it is rather more awkward to put a person—a woman—under such an obligation as this. How I should hate it! I wonder, does she? I suppose she won't be at breakfast. That, at least, is a comfort." Then he reflected that, with people such as these, he would not be too absurdly overwhelmed with gratitude. At last he turned to a book, fully satisfied that, on the whole, he had the best of it, and that there was no need to growl at Fate.

In a minute or two he exclaimed, "In-door poetry, that"; and dropped the volume of too dainty verse. The substance beneath was not worth the polish on top. He was not in a book mood, or disposed to anchor. The hours slipped by without freight of urgent question or answer. He was in a dreamy state, and, liking the hazy indistinctness of its demands, invented for his use, with a smile of approval, the word, "Vaguearies."

Smiling, he made note of this verbal find, as Ellett came up the beach.

"What pleases you, Fred? And what is all this row the men are talking about?"

"One at a time. I was hoping that the woman I shall love will take generously to my pipe."

"She will be a fool if she don't. I always advise the women never to marry a man who does n't smoke. You see, if they fall out a bit, she can always say, 'Well, just take a cigar, Fred, and think it over.' I am sure the proportion of divorces must be smaller among the couples that include a smoker. Good notion, that!"

"It is on the heights of wisdom!"

"Is n't it? And you have n't been fishing?"

"Yes; I did fish, but I got no fish. I caught a mild little adventure."

"Michelle began to tell me—"

"Michelle be hanged! These guides are always dramatic!"

"Well, and what was it happened? Tell me."

"Talk to you about that by and by." He was indisposed to have too much made of the incidents of the morning. Why, he could hardly have explained. He did not want Miss Lyndsay discussed. Perhaps this was what the doctors call a prodrome—of a malady known to man and maid. Love may, like other forces in life, assume many forms before it unmasks and we know it as love. The correlation of forces obtains in the world of the emotions as well as in that of matter.

"How confoundedly queer you are sometimes, Fred! I can wait, I suppose; but I don't see why."

"Oh, because my mind is an absolute vacuum. That is a rather interesting thought, Oliver, quite worthy of Boston! Fancy an entire mental vacuum! Is it any more possible than a physical one? Don't you think there may be a zero of thought, as of cold — or of heat, I should say?"

"Nonsense!" cried Ellett.

"Want to know? Do you? Well, I was seriously thinking that when we can get photographs in colors, it will be a delightful thing to collect sunsets."

"I don't care a continental malediction for sunsets, or thought-zeroes, either. What 's the matter with you? Michelle says you shot a bear, or a young woman — I am not sure which. He was a little mixed about it. But why you should —"

"I was only chaffing you, old man." He was really, and like a child, putting off an inevitable annoyance. He knew he must talk of it all to his friend, and felt himself ridiculously unwilling either to make it seem grave or to treat it as a matter for jesting comment. Not to understand the cause of your own states of indecision is, for the habitually decisive, most unpleasant, and yet silence may make a thing seem important which is not.

"What happened, Oliver, was this." And he quietly narrated the incidents of the morning.

"I congratulate you, Fred."

"And why?"

"Well, if you are idiot enough to ask that in sober earnest, I am not fool enough to reply in kind. And so Miss Lyndsay knows who her bowman was?"

"Yes."

"Did she like it?"

"How the deuce do I know?"

"But I should think you could tell. I hope that girl lost her temper. Girls who can't lose their tempers can't lose their hearts. That 's pretty good, Fred!"

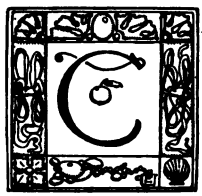
"Nonsense! Who wants her to lose her heart? You can judge for yourself, if you are curious—we are to breakfast with them to-morrow. Get any fish?"

"One—only ten pounds. The new run is up, Pierre says. Saw plenty of small fish leaping. But about these Lyndsays?"

"Let 's have supper. Hang the Lyndsays!"

"Both, with all my heart; and I will also suspend my opinions, if it suits you better. Was n't bad, that!" And then, as Fred walked away to stir up the cook, Ellett muttered, "What the mischief 's gone wrong with the man?" And so, being a kindly fellow and considerate, as far as he knew how to evolve in action this form of social wisdom, he dropped the subject for the evening, and, as Miss Anne used to say, "left time to pull the chestnuts out of the fire, when they were cool enough to be useful as diet."

CHAPTER XV



ARINGTON had slept off his brief ill-humor, and the friends were in a happier mood as they flitted downstream next day to breakfast with the Lyndsays.

At the Cliff Camp things were not so entirely joyful. Mrs. Lyndsay, after a talk about the simple bill of fare with the black cook they had brought with them, paid a furtive visit to Jack, who was condemned to such tranquillity as was possible, even in bed, for a human machine as restless. She administered a tender scolding, and left him with a book or two. Next she softly opened Rose's door, and, finding her comfortable and smiling, said, "No, dear, you are to keep still to-day," and left her to reflect that, on the whole, she was as well satisfied not to meet the "two single gentlemen rolled into one" before the entire family. However clearly the matter had been explained, there remained, and she colored as she thought of it, the remembrance of certain things she had said to her bowman. Nor was it quite pleasing to imagine herself discussed by these two strangers over their evening meal. The scene in the boat—"She would like to have him always as her bowman!" The scene on the beach! And then the

obligation! The debt to an unknown man! In what currency should such debts be paid? She smiled, as she quoted to herself:

> What need
> Good turns be counted as a servile bond
> To bind their doers to receive their meed?

Then, having no other more consoling thought on hand, she began to recall how the novelists had dealt with these situations. A man saves your life! What then? As far as she remembered, it always ended in the woman giving the man what he saved — a life! — her life! She would have liked to have certain books to see precisely what they did say, or Aunt Anne, who was herself and generally all books beside. As she played with these questions, a little amused or a trifle annoyed, Miss Anne knocked, and was welcomed.

"Aunt Anne," she cried merrily, "what would you do for a man who saves you from a horrible mauling by a bear, or possibly from death?"

"The novelists marry them. That cancels the debt, or makes the woman in the end regret the man's skill and strength."

"Aunty, that is very cheap cynicism for you, and at eight A. M.! What will you be at dinner?"

"I repent, dear. I hate the sneer — easy and obvious. I am always penitent over verbal wickednesses that are mere children of habit, and have no wit to excuse them. Is the question, dear, worth considering?"

"Oh, but seriously —"

"I mean seriously. Would it not depend on the moral make of the people concerned? Clearly, when those involved are of one world, likely to meet,—to have continuous relations of some sort,—it must lead to close friendship when the debt of life is merely between man and man."

"Yes; but when a woman owes an unknown person—a man in her own class—an obligation like this? She must feel it—really feel it, as I do."

"My dear, you are a little absurd. Many debts remain unpaid, and should so remain. How do you pay your debts to Shakspere? And, after all, this is a small affair—Mr. Carington was in no peril."

"No, it was n't that. The thing involved courage and decision. Papa has told me all of it—all. And the ball went only a couple of feet over dear Ned and myself. Any one but a brave and positive man would have hesitated—and, just a moment more! It is dreadful to think of it! Dreadful!"

"Your gratitude is quite too analytical for me, dear."

"But do you believe, aunty, with mama, that there cannot be true, simple friendships between man and woman?"

"Man and woman? A large question."

"Yes."

"Certainly, I believe there can be—more likely, more easy, more possible with us than in Europe. I know of many such, where what was in youth a friendship, limited by conventions, became, as years went on, a larger, deeper, more valuable relation, and yet only and always a friendship."

"Thank you!"

"I think myself that when women—married women—grow wise, they will want their husbands to have women friends. Margaret would say, 'That is an old maid's opinion.' Nevertheless, it is mine, and, as I have chosen never to marry, it is valuable. The old maid is a sort of neutral, with the wisdom of both sexes."

"I should like to choose my husband's female friends."

"Should you? I have not talked it out yet, but now I must go. I want to see how your creditor behaves. He may be a true Shylock and want—how many pounds do you weigh, dear?"

"You are horrid, aunty! I certainly do not think you have settled my questions."

"How can I? or you? or he, for that matter? Time, dear, not only answers letters, but also doubts and difficulties. As a consulting physician, I am told, he is unsurpassed. You are, naturally, in a state of unease to-day, and had better wait until you see what kind of a draft on the bank of gratitude you are called on to pay, or honor, if you like the word better. I don't know whether, nowadays, commercial men use the word, or the thing. You might send him a silver pitcher, the inscription to be, 'To my preserver, from the preserved,' or else—"

"Go away, bad aunty!" cried Rose, laughing. Once alone, she began upon her coffee and rolls, and wished it was next month, and thus, like Carington, turned over her hot chestnuts to pussy-cat time. They were too hot for her.

Miss Anne went out on the porch, and began watching, with the interest she took in almost all earthly pursuits, Ned's efforts to tie a salmon-fly, while Dick, beside him, was feeding the drosera's hairy leaves with minute black gnats, and considering, through a lens, the ferocious certainty with which the vegetable monster closed upon the captives cast among its sensitive limbs. Presently Dick said to her:

"Aunt Anne, is father very angry with Jack?"

"Yes."

"I 'm sorry, because — because he really did n't have time to think — and it was n't cowardly."

"No, it was n't that."

"But I ran away." He had a vague feeling that to prove himself to have gone amiss would be to lessen the enormity of Jack's conduct.

"You went into the wood to call the men, and were the first back on the beach, my Prince Rosy-locks. You are a first-rate liar; but, as you are a Lyndsay, you are not a coward, and you had better kick yourself well for insulting Dick Lyndsay!

> I may not turn, I may not flee,
> Though many be the spears;
> I should not face with better grace
> The army of my fears.

I do not blame Jacky as much as your father does. I understand him, I think."

"He feels awfully, Aunt Anne."

"That will do no harm, Dick." The boy turned again to the drosera and his lens.

Anne was herself so entirely brave that not even the prospect of the coming of added pain had ever been able to make her timid. All forms of courage were to her intelligibly beautiful, knowing as she did that if its mere instinctive form be meaningless, it is, in its higher developments, the knightly defense of all the virtues. She pulled Dick's ear, playfully, and said, finally:

"Jack will be out at noon. The less you say about it, the better."

"I guess so," remarked Dick.

"Ah, here comes Mr. Carington. Now, boys, behave yourselves at breakfast. No nonsense, mind! This is to be a very pretty-behaved family; we will make up for it at lunch."

The two gentlemen were in turn presented. There were the ordinary greetings, and no word of allusion to the day before, except that Mrs. Lyndsay, in a quiet aside, said to Carington:

"I shall not be quite comfortable until I say how much I thank you — for all of us — all."

"That is more than enough," he returned. "How is Miss Lyndsay?"

"Wonderfully well!" And presently they went in to breakfast.

"Here by me, please, Mr. Carington. Anne, sit next to Mr. Carington. This seat, Mr. Ellett — on the left."

The boys, a little subdued, contented themselves with quiet inspection of the new guests, and the talk slipped readily, in skilful hands, from the subjects of fish and the weather, and flies and rods, to other less

trivial matters. Anne was unusually silent. She was studying the unconscious Carington, who soon noted the absence of Jack, and as quickly understood its meaning.

"Yes," said Lyndsay, "these Gaspe men are most interesting. They are clever, competent, and inherently kindly, really good fellows; but their trouble is, and it does not trouble them, that they have no persistent energy. I confess that, being myself, at least while here, without energy, I like its absence."

"Is n't it a vast relief, after the endless restlessness of our people," said Anne, "to fall among folks who are contented, and home-loving, and so uncomplicated?"

"I certainly think so," said Carington. "And what a surprise it is to meet the stray descendants of loyalists hereabouts and on the 'St. John's'—I ought to say the 'Aroostook,' there are so many 'St. John's.' Some of the best of the Canadians are descendants of those people; but, for the most part, those who settled in certain quarters of Lower Canada are down again to the level of mere laborers or fishermen."

"And no better off," said Ellett. "I mean no more energetic than—well, than I am. I hate the very word energy. I quite share your opinions, Miss Lyndsay. There is a nice little conundrum about that word—sounds better in French. But, pardon me, I never repeat conundrums, or make puns."

"I am so sorry. Are you past persuasion?"

"Entirely."

"Even as a personal confidence?"

"That is another matter. It will keep. I think, Mr. Lyndsay, you were about to say—"

"I forget. But no matter. One may talk about, and about things, at breakfast especially. It is pleasant to feel that you may kick—that any one concerned may kick—the foot-ball of talk without reference to a goal."

"I don't think my friend Carington would agree to that," said Ellett. "He likes talk to be well feathered, and go straight home—"

"And I like it," cried Anne, "to be well feathered, and go zigzag home, or not, like a bird."

"And, for my part, aside from Ellett's calumnious nonsense," laughed Carington, "I have no social creed as to good talk. If it bears sharp analysis, it is probably poor talk."

"But," said Anne, "there are some essentials. One must reverse the great maxim that it is more blessed to give than to receive."

Mrs. Lyndsay regarded the maiden lady with a look of reprobation, in which were trial, judgment, and execution. She reserved her verbal attack for a better occasion, while Anne, unconscious of offense, went on, "Was n't it Mr. Lowell, Archie, who said at our table, when you questioned him as to the best talkers he had met, 'Oh, the best are those who meet you'? I thought that delicately put."

"But then he added," said Lyndsay, "when you mentioned G. M. as on the whole the most remarkable of dinner talkers, that he had not the essential conversational art of punctuation. That his sentences were like those of Judge Jeffries, eternal How one spoils such a thing in the telling! We all smiled at it a little. Our friend himself liked an

audience, and to have, at times, the royal freedom of unbroken talk. North, a friend of ours, Mr. Carington, has a theory that breakfast talks are the best."

"I should think so," said Ellett, and then began to think he had been rather critical, and added, "I mean — well, I usually breakfast alone, and a fellow can't talk to himself."

"This fellow can," cried Anne.

"He meant," said Lyndsay, "that breakfast talk is apt to be general and gay; but that at dinner you have the cares of the day on your back. It takes a little effort, or a little champagne, to get up steam."

"But I have no cares," said Ellett.

"Then," cried Miss Lyndsay, "we will all dine with you, and you shall do all the talking."

"That would suit my sister admirably," laughed her brother. "Did you ever notice how silent many of these woodmen are?"

"Yes," said Carington, "that is true. The woodland life has the same effect upon me."

"That 's curious," remarked Miss Lyndsay. "Certain people blast me with utter dumbness. It might be useful if it were kept up long enough to form a habit. I mention that to anticipate my brother. One does sometimes say what one does n't want to say — but, oh, I do think one much more often wants dreadfully to say what one had better not say."

"I think that is true," said Mrs. Lyndsay, with reminiscent gravity.

"Which? or both?" said Anne, in an aside.

"By the way," said Lyndsay, "talking of these unlucky relics of the royalists, and, in fact, of too many

on these coasts, the most energetic of us would succumb to their environment."

"Yes; there is that poor devil, Colkett," said Carington, "a good hunter, a hard worker — I am told, a first-rate lumberman — and yet always in want."

"To judge from my daughter's account," said Mrs. Lyndsay, "the wife is his difficulty."

By this time the boys were at ease.

"What is an 'environment,' Aunt Anne?" said Ned. "Is a wife an environment?"

Ellett laughed. "Sometimes she is."

"Environments are surroundings — a man's surroundings." She always answered the boys seriously.

"But does a wife surround a man?" urged Ned, oblivious of his place as a boy among elders in his keen pursuit of a meaning.

"I should think so!" said Carington. "Wait till your turn comes! You will see!"

"I am quite sure Dorothy Maybrook is a fair illustration," said Anne. "It is a good sermon on the conduct of the matrimonial life to see that woman what she calls 'p'int' poor old Hiram."

"An interesting person," returned Carington. "Don't you think so?"

"It hurts a fellow to see a woman as placid as that," remarked Ellett. Whereupon Miss Anne adjusted her glasses, and took a look at the small, rotund man.

"Why?" she said. "Why does it hurt you?"

He hesitated a trifle, and then replied, "Well, it sort of knocks all the excuses out of a fellow's life."

"Certainly," laughed Anne. "She does n't pet her moods," and she concluded that there was something in the ruddy gentleman, who looked so pleased at what he had said.

"I have known her under many circumstances," said Mrs. Lyndsay, "and I doubt if she has any moods."

"I rather suspect," said Lyndsay, "that Mrs. Maybrook's equality of temper is partly natural, and partly a singularly intelligent acquired capacity to make the best of her surroundings."

"Environment," said Ned, under his breath, and now satisfied.

"Really, Rose knows more about her than even my wife, who has known her longer; but Rose has a curious way of getting at people, and I have seldom seen Rose so carried away by any one."

"I envy people the power of understanding people on short acquaintance. I like everybody at first, and then, by and by, I have to change my mind. Now, Carington—"

"Nonsense!" cried his friend.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Anne. She thought Mr. Ellett oddly frank.

"From all I can hear," said Carington, "Mrs. Maybrook must be a kind of female Marcus Aurelius." This was quite too much for the boys, who began to laugh; and then, as Lyndsay and his wife followed their example, Miss Anne felt obliged to explain, in her amusing way, why this remark had so unaccountably disturbed the nerves of the household. Lyndsay defended himself with seriousness. As they rose to have their cigars outside, Ned said:

"We are going up to the beach, father. Rose lost a pin there. May we take lunch, mama? There is plenty of brass knocker from breakfast."

"Pardon me," said Carington, "my dear fellow; but what on earth is 'brass knocker'?"

Lyndsay laughed. "That is a family bit of my Scotch education. The lowland Scotchman calls the relics of a meal the 'brass knocker,' because once, I suppose, the poor relations, who came to get the remains of a feast, were expected to knock, and not to ring."

"How curious. Yes, thank you, I will smoke. Mrs. Lyndsay?"

"Oh, my women are angelic about that!"

"Indeed, if we were fallen angels," said Anne, "we could hardly be more used to it." Then she said, "I hope we may see you and Mr. Ellett often. I must go and tell Rose what a pleasant chat we have had."

As she turned, she swayed a little, so as to touch Mr. Carington. "Pardon me," she said, "I am not over-strong, and it now and then makes me awkward." She was really in extreme pain. "Good-by."

He stepped aside to let her pass, struck, as she moved away, with her pallor. It was a sign of unusual liking in this woman when she permitted herself the least allusion to her own feebleness.

Carington was in the gayest of moods as their canoe went up the river.

"He has very good cigars," remarked Ellett.

"Admirable! And the air up here, I have noticed, keeps them in first-rate condition. Cigars are a good deal like people, Oliver — they are unaccountably changeable. Ever notice that?"

"Yes; but a pipe is an unchanging friend. Cigars are like women. That 's a good idea!"

"Bother your ideas! What interesting people! It seemed to me a wholesome atmosphere — strong and true and honest. Master Jack did not appear. I suppose he was in disgrace."

"Very likely."

"That boy Ned is a quaint little fellow."

"We only wanted the sister and that scamp to make up the entire family."

"I am not so sure about the scamp — the black sheep; I fancy he is hardly more than brown. I was rather hard on him; but I was angry enough to have thrashed him, and yet I could n't help liking his pluck."

"It was rather out of place, Fred."

"Yes. To know when to fear, and what to fear, is wisdom."

"I think you have it to-day, Fred. You are afraid of that girl."

"Upon my word, you do have at times the most remarkable flashes of intelligence. You are right."

"But why? The awkwardness of the affair seems to me to lie on the lady's side."

"I wish it were not. She is young, and — well, rather pretty, and of course she will be effusive, and enthuse, and then there will be a few tears, and I shall feel like a fool!"

"It 's a great thing, Fred, to have no imagination. Now, it would n't trouble me in the least. She will just say, 'I am so much obliged, Mr. Carington,' and you will say, 'Oh, it really does n't matter, Miss Lynd-

say.' People don't go splashing their emotions about like a wet dog shaking off the water on everybody. Good notion, that!"

"You are a social and consolatory Solomon. Give me your tobacco. I shall go back to-morrow and have it over. Will you fish the upper pool this afternoon?"

"Either."

"Hang your politeness, Oliver. There is nothing gives as much trouble as 'either.' It ought to be kicked out of society."

"Then the lower pool."

"Good!"

There was a little interchange of views at the Cliff Camp as to their guests; a certain pleasantness of relief at finding Carington one who could confer an immense obligation and appear totally to ignore it. Perhaps, of all of them, Anne the best appreciated this; for she understood, as did neither her brother nor his simple and direct wife, that Rose felt and must deeply feel a sense of indebtedness, and the difficulty of at once putting herself into the right relations with the man who had, without peril to himself, left on her a debt which could never be canceled. It was easy to say about it to Rose too much or too little; but, with her usual clearness of head as to matters of conduct, Miss Lyndsay now held her tongue, nor did Rose tempt her to speak further.

As to Jack, he came out of his room at one, adding an hour out of pure dislike to having any one think he cared. Anne spoke to him, as he passed her, a mere "How are you, Jack?" but he merely answered,

"Good morning, Aunt Anne," and went at once to the barrel in which he had left his cub. It was gone; but whither he never knew. Then he came in to get his rifle, a gift from Anne on his last and fifteenth birthday. That, too, was gone. Upon this he got a crust of bread, and betook himself to the woods, where the black flies were more active than his conscience. At last he climbed a high dead pine, and sat in the wind, and saw, far away on the river, his father's canoe. He felt that he had been ill-used, and then, remembering Rose on the beach, with the blood about her, had an hour or so of a boy's unhappiness. Toward evening he found a woodchuck's burrow, which he resolved to dig out; and, somewhat comforted, at last wandered back to the cabin, all other emotions having given way before the overwhelming hunger to which, in his wrath, he had needlessly condemned himself.

intrusion, and years ago had won it, but not without some contest with Margaret, who was quite unable to see why any one could want to be solitary. Anne would say, "I am never alone, my dear," and was of opinion that the hardest thing to get in a large family were these sacred hours of privacy. Too many women know that.

She was just now absolutely free from pain, and in unrestrained enjoyment of the cool, dry air of the Canadian river, which ran below, and sent up at unaccountable intervals strange noises as she listened. Now it was a low, booming, bass note, and now mingled sounds, as of cries, and distant chuckle of suppressed mirth, where, above and below, the voyaging waters hopped merrily over their rocky path to the sea. The moon was high overhead, and lit up the water with life of light, when here and there the checked current rose in snowy foam over some huge boulder, dropped ages since on the mighty portage of the ice-swept continent. Nor cry nor insect-note came from the somber masses of the hills. After awhile she turned her head, and looked in through the window at the good people who were so near to her heart. Then she called, "Jack! Jack!"

The boy got up and went out to her.

"Sit down on that stool beside me," she said. He obeyed in silence.

"How is the cub, Jacky Giant-Killer?"

"He is gone!"

"Indeed! I am sorry for that. I wanted to see it. Did it get away?"

"No. I suppose father gave it to Tom, or some-

body. I don't care. It was my cub. I don't care," he repeated.

"Jacky, if Goliath had lied in proportion to his size, he could not have lied larger than that. Now, is n't that so?"

"Oh, I don't care, and I do." Then he broke out angrily, "The thing is, Aunt Anne, nobody asked me a question; nobody wanted to give me a chance; and that long-legged fellow that shot the bear, he said — I wish he was my size! — he called me an idiot."

"The description was brief and correct. What brains you have — and they are good enough — you did not use. Three people called to you to drop the cub. Why did n't you? You see what mischief came of it; and how much worse it might have been I do not like to think. Why did you hold on to the cub?"

"I just could n't let it go, Aunt Anne. You 're awful good to a fellow. There is no one like you." And here she captured his hand.

"Why could n't you? It was only to do that." And she let his hand drop, and caught it again.

"It would have been cowardly."

"Of course — I knew it; I knew what you thought; but I wanted you to say it out."

"Nobody else has asked me. I did n't think that bear would go after anybody but me and the cub, and I just held on."

"I see. It explains what you felt; it does not excuse what you did. This is not quite all of it."

He was silent.

"You were afraid some one would think you were afraid. Was n't that a sort of cowardice, Jack?"

He was clear of head now, and this arrow went to the mark.

"Yes," he said; "I 'd hate to think I was afraid."

"What is courage?"

"Oh, not to be afraid; never to be afraid."

"Is that all? Is n't there a nobler courage that goes hand in hand with reason and love and unselfishness? A man ought to fear when there is reason to fear — to fear evil, or hurt of others, or dishonor, or sin. You have unreasoning courage. How are you better than a bulldog? I remember once, at your father's table, that I asked a great and wise general as to another, who was famous for mere heedless bravery, what he thought of him. 'Oh,' he said, 'he was a great thunderbolt of war, to be thrown by a hand not his own.' The man who spoke was brave as are God's bravest, Jack; but he had always his wits about him, and knew when to go on and when to fall back. Is n't that the finer courage?"

"I guess so," said the boy. And then, abruptly, "Are you ever afraid, Aunt Anne?"

"No." And it was true.

"But if you were in a battle, or were going to die?"

"I am!"

"Oh, but soon?"

"I am! Look here, Jacky, my dear Jacky. I never talk of myself; but I will this once, for you. I am a very ill woman; in a year or two I shall die. It is certain. I am to leave this world and those I love. I suffer pain all the time. No one knows how much."

"Oh, Aunt Anne!"

"Yes. Now I am not afraid to die. I am not even afraid of this pain, which goes on from bad to worse. If some angel came and said, 'You are free to die to-morrow,' I would say 'No.' Life is my little bear-cub, and it is n't like your cub. I should be afraid to be such a coward as, for fear of pain, to want to let go my cub; and that is because God has put me here to bear what ills come to me, and to use them so as to get something out of life—to learn endurance and true courage. Perhaps some one else may get something out of it. I do not want to talk over your head, Jack. Do you understand me?"

"I think so," and tears began to fall on her hand. "I am—I am so sorry for you."

"That is well,—although I am foolish as to pity, and like best to keep my troubles to myself. But if to know all this helps you to do right, to know what the courage which comes from God means, I shall not have suffered in vain."

"Thank you!" He began to comprehend her courageous reticence, and was appalled at this insight into the anguish and struggle of this calm, self-contained life, which went laughing on its way to death.

"Kiss me," she said, "and mind this is between us two. I try usually not to pain others with my pain. Except to help you, I would not have made you suffer for my suffering. No one knows why there is so much torment in the wide world of man and beast, but some of it is clear enough. I have made your young heart ache to-night; but this suffering has a meaning, and ought to have a use."

"Thank you, dear Aunt Anne!"

"Don't cry any more," she said. "I shall love you better than ever because we have trusted each other. Now I think you know what to do. Don't wait," and she laughed pleasantly; "procrastination is the thief — of what, Jacky?"

"Oh, of time." And he laughed.

"No, no, stupid! — of all the virtues. Your father is in the room. Kiss me."

The boy rose up and went straight into the cabin. With his head in air, and a little flushed, he walked up to his father, and stood as the latter looked up from his book.

"I am sorry, sir, for what I did yesterday. I was wrong."

Lyndsay put out his hand, and the mother also looked up from her book.

"That will do," he said. "I thought you would come right. Go and kiss Rose."

He did so, whispering in her ear, "I am awful sorry, Rose." Then, in the brief silence that followed, he walked out again, and went back to Anne.

"It was n't hard?" she said.

"Yes, it was! I hated it, but I did it."

"Now, that was honest courage, Jack. You will feel better for it to-morrow. Good night; I must go to bed myself."

Jack went in with her, and by the way in which he was bidden good night, saw that the bear business was over. Before he fell asleep, he heard Rose ask:

"May I come in?"

"Yes," he shouted. She came to the bedside and kissed him.

"Is n't it? Nowadays Fred has more money than I have. You see, he builds bridges and things."

"Then you and your friend Mr. Carington have little in common, from your account."

"Oh, yes, we have; we like each other."

"That 's neatly and nicely said; but don't you think that, on the whole, in people who are intellectually sympathetic, unlikeness of tastes and pursuits may be as good a foundation for friendship as a common fondness for this or that?"

"Y-e-s," said the small gentleman, somewhat perplexed. He was slow of apprehension, but in the end likely enough to become clear as to what he should think of things said. Miss Anne, on the other hand, was a rapid talker and thinker, and sometimes overestimated the capacity of people to follow her.

"We were speaking of this last week. I said then that as little reason goes into the making of most friendships as into most love-affairs, or, for that matter, into most of the religious attachments which men call their beliefs. Friendship ought to be a tranquil love-affair of the head, without base question of dot," and she laughed.

"But I like a fellow first, and then find reasons for it afterward."

"I said it was a love-affair of the head. I have a small heart somewhere in my head; I know that. Some folks have two heads, and call one a heart."

"I don't think I quite follow you, Miss Lyndsay," said Ellett.

"Oh, there 's no need to."

"But it 's dreadful to get left the way I do, at the first hurdle. I was going to tell you what Fred said to me once; it was n't bad at all. He said once that ours was a friendship of *convenance* at first, and then, afterward — Well, the fact was, I happened to hear that he needed money, and I used to admire him, but I never did think he would care for a fellow like me, that shot pigeons, and rode steeplechase, and—killed things."

"And you helped him?"

"Good heavens, Miss Lyndsay! I never meant to —to say anything about that. I—"

"You need not apologize," she said, smiling. "I am getting to be a pretty old maid, and that gives me privileges. I think I like Mr. Carington's friend"; and she said to herself, "You are a dear, shrewdly simple little man."

Then he thanked her, blushing as he rose, and saying:

"Now, I must go and get a fish."

As for Rose, she began to feel that it was rather nice of Mr. Carington to be in no haste to come after the inevitable gratitude; but when a pleasant note came to Mrs. Lyndsay inclosing the flies, she began also to have a certain amount of curiosity as to the man in question, much, I suppose, like the beginning of that same fatal emotion which in the end causes the salmon to inspect at closer quarters the provocative Jock Scott or Durham ranger.

It was now near the end of their second week, and the after part of the third day from that which saw the drama of the bear and cub. Rose had killed two

salmon in the morning, and, not having altogether gotten over the loss of blood, had declined to fish again in the afternoon. Anne was in her room, the mother out in the boat with Mr. Lyndsay, and the boys off to dig up the unhappy woodchuck. Rose had the pleasant feeling of having the house to herself. She took a volume of Lowell, and, settling herself in the hammock, was soon so deep in the delicate analysis of Gray that she did not observe the coming canoe, until of a sudden Carington was beside her.

"Good evening, Miss Lyndsay."

Rose made the usual awkward effort to rise from her comfortable nest, saying, "I am like the starling, I can't get out."

"Permit me," he said, and, with the help of his hand, she was on her feet.

"Upon my word," she laughed, "you seem to be essential to the getting me out of scrapes. I am, I was, always shall be hopelessly in your debt," and she blushed prettily, feeling that she had been less formal than she had meant to be. "Pray sit down," she added, taking a camp-stool.

"Thanks. Don't you think that to give a man such a chance to oblige people like — like your father and mother — rather puts the sense of obligation on the other side?"

"Aunt Anne says that it is written large on some debts, 'Not transferable.' You have put it very nicely, and still you must let me say once for all, I thank you."

"And I am forgiven for my boy frolic?"

"I don't know," she cried, smiling. "That is not nominated in the bond."

"Well, we will consider the other obligations settled," he said, "and leave this for future adjustment. You will give me what the men call a good 'recommend' for a new place as bowman? I am rather vain of my poling. How wet you were!"

"Wet! You have no idea. It established new standards of moisture for me. But we got the fish."

He liked the pronoun of partnership.

"Yes. I wonder if Mr. Lyndsay would let you fish our water. I could promise you a salmon or two. Ellett would like to exchange to-morrow afternoon, and try your lower pool, so that, if Mr. Lyndsay would take the lower half of our fishing and we the upper, we should be agreeably matronized — patronized I should say. Will you be so good as to give your father this note?"

Rose said yes, and he took up the book she had dropped into the hammock.

"Lowell! I like his essays more than his verse, except always the immortal fun of the Biglow Papers. That must surely live. For most of his poetry I care little."

"Yes, it is graceful, interesting at times, which is not true of some much greater verse; but I do not care for it much,— and that is dreadful, because we all know him well and love him well."

"Indeed! How pleasant that must be! Long as I have lived near him, I have never seen him."

"We shall quarrel here and now if you do not at once praise the Biglow Papers."

"Oh! but I could not say too much of them. After their kind they stand alone."

"Thank you! And how rare it is that the poets combine humor with the higher qualities! It is sadly true of our day."

"Yes, yes! It is laughable to hear people talk of Browning's humor. At times he is grotesque or sardonic — never delicately humorous or funny. We want a word in between fun and humor. And Tennyson is not humorous. It all seems a part of the gloom which has fallen on English letters."

"Oh, there is 'Plump head-waiter at the Cock'!"

"That is the exception, and is not very notable, like Lowell's sustained and delightful verbal play; the rest are no better or worse off — the lesser larks, I mean."

"Yes, and Shelley has no humor, and Keats's attempts are only illustrations of the fact that editors don't know where to draw the line."

"How agreeable we are!" he said, laughing. He had the happy art of low-pitched laughter.

"That way of saying we agree," she said, "would delight Aunt Anne."

"And do you find time up here to read much?" he went on. "I cannot. The hours go by like the water, without freight of thought."

"Not much," she returned. "I read very little here, although at home we are mighty consumers of books. I am as little fond of the needle as is my aunt, but one takes up a book lazily here as a sort of companion that does not insist on answers."

"You seem to have provided a goodly ration," he returned, looking about him.

"I am hardly responsible for this mob of books. My good mother is in despair over our accumulations, and my father declares that the house at home is a Noah's ark of books after their kind."

"And what kind?" said Carington, much pleased to get off so easily from what he had feared might be an importunate debtor.

"Oh, every kind! Of course, my good father's legal books now and then drift away from their proper place. Then Jack collects voyages and ferocities by land and sea, and Dick will spend his last dime on books about beasts and plants. My dear Ned reads everybody's books with entire impartiality. Aunt Anne must have digested libraries; but then she is not like anybody else. I hardly call it reading. She falls upon a book, and appears to look it over carelessly, and then, after you have read it with attention, you find that she knows twice as much about it as you do."

"But that is very interesting. I judged from our little chat at breakfast that Miss Anne was out of the ranks of our commonplace world. And she reads widely?"

"Yes! We call her the 'book-hawk.' It is rare fun to see her pounce on a tempting volume."

"She struck me, if I may venture to say so, as most interesting; but that there should remain this immense, ever active energy of appropriation with feeble health seems remarkable."

A little surprised, Rose asked, "Why do you think her ill?"

"She told me so,—or hardly that: she was merely

led to say she was not strong, and a glance at that pale drawn face, Miss Lyndsay, would — pardon me — I —"

"No. Perhaps I should explain my surprise. It was because to hear of Aunt Anne as confessing weakness was to me more strange than you can imagine, unless you knew her as we do."

"I liked it," said Caringtón.

"Yes. It means that she — well — it means that she is going to like you — a signal."

"Thank you; that is very pleasant. But, talking of books again, you left off just where I hoped you were going to tell me what books after your kind go into the family ark."

"I was going to do nothing of the sort," cried Rose, with a laugh. "You will think we are a dull set of mere book-grubbers. I can assure you we are very foolish people, and can be as silly as the silliest."

"You shall have credit for any possible margin of folly."

"Oh, there must be a limit. I did not want to leave you to think we are what Aunt Anne calls book proud."

"Book proud?"

"Yes. You must have known people who seem at some time to have suddenly discovered books, the real books, and are vastly set up by their new-found wealth."

"I know. I was stupid. My friend Ellett came pretty near to having a grave case of the malady soon after I first knew him, but he was cured easily with the tenth dilution of a sarcasm."

"Were you the doctor?"

"I was. I hope you liked him, Miss Lyndsay. I like my friend to be liked by — by every one."

"You meant to say, by your friends," she returned, with pretty frankness. "You have committed the folly of making a large addition to your list."

"And I may include Miss Rose Lyndsay?" he said, as he stood up.

"That goes without saying."

"But I want it with the saying."

"Then you have it," and she gave her hand for good-by, and he went away. At the cliff edge he paused.

"I shall be dreadfully disappointed if we do not get the fishing."

"But I think we shall."

"Then good-by again." In a moment he was in his canoe, for he had come alone, and was sturdily poling up the stream. The well-knit figure in the becoming guise of jacket and knickerbockers held her eye until it was lost around the river curves. Then she said aloud:

"That is a very nice man."

The man in the canoe said to himself:

"Please God I shall marry that woman."

An hour ago she was Miss Lyndsay and as other women had been to him. But now — he smiled.

When Miss Lyndsay had made her own little statement, she looked about her shyly of a sudden, as if fearful lest some one might have overheard her, and, reassured by the knowledge that she was alone, added:

"I am not as sorry as I was." The why of this last decision she did not seek to analyze, but dropped

into the hammock, and, lulled by its motion, by and by fell asleep.

After awhile came Lyndsay on tip-toe, and, smiling, kissed her, and then again before she quite waked up.

"A pair — two pair — of gloves," he cried.

At this she sat up, with a faint blush on her cheek, fetched from far away out of dreamland. I do not know of what she was dreaming.

"You startled me so, Pardy. How wicked you are! Mr. Carington has been here, and left a note for you."

"And you settled your small obligations — hey, Rose?"

"I did."

"Difficult?" He had anticipated her embarrassments.

"No. Not even you could have been nicer about it."

"And you liked him? We did."

"Yes — oh, yes," she said with indifference. "I thought him pleasant. He talks quite well, and is a gentleman."

"Rather mild praise for a man who —"

"Don't, please, Pardy; I — I hate to be joked about it."

"I won't, dear. To say, in these days of too easy fashions, that a man is a gentleman means, for us at least, a good deal."

"I think so. Of course, I had to say distinctly that I thanked him, and he received it so — so quietly and simply that I was not in the least embarrassed. I can't tell you, Pardy, how absurdly I dreaded it."

Thereupon Mr. Lyndsay went in, saying to himself:

"I hope the receiver is n't going to be the thief — confound the business!"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE next day, being Saturday, a little note sent in the morning told Carington that Miss Lyndsay and her father would fish his waters in the afternoon. Her father took Rose up in his own canoe, and at the Island Camp they found their new friends. Mr. Ellett went off to take their pool, and Rose was soon seated in Carington's canoe, facing the stern of the boat.

"No," he said gaily, "I shall sit between you and Michelle, here in the bottom. I shall be very comfortable, and I shall be able to criticize your casts. No, I don't mean to fish. It is your day — all yours. We shall beat you, Mr. Lyndsay. Mind, Michelle, we are bent on wholesale business."

Then they were off, and in a half-hour were at the head of the pool, a full cast from the bank, and in a wilful rush of broken water. Meanwhile Mr. Lyndsay dropped down half a mile below them.

"I am afraid you must cast seated," said Carington. "The boat rocks too much for it to be safe to stand."

"That makes it harder."

"Yes; but you won't mind my coaching you?"

"Oh, no!"

"Then, use your arms and wrist in the cast. Don't try to put too much force in it. There, that is better — so."

She went on casting, a little troubled by the critical watchfulness of the curly head below her, for Carington had thrown his cap at his feet and sat bareheaded. At last, in the second drop, a fish rose.

"Did n't you see him?"

"No."

"He rose. Wait a little. He lies on a line with that cedar. Now, again. They are in rising mood to-day. I rose six here this morning, and then left the pool, so as not to exhaust their curiosity."

"That was to leave me the chance," thought Rose.

"There, Miss Lyndsay; he was pretty eager that time.

"A rise to a Rose seems grammatically improbable," he murmured, laughing outright at his own nonsense, and happy enough to be easily silly.

"What amuses you?" she said.

"Oh, nothing."

"Then you are very readily amused."

"I am to-day. Up anchor. He has it. Tip up! So! A grilse."

"Oh! how he jumps," she cried, for he was in and out of the water a dozen times.

"That is the fashion of his kind, young and foolish. Hold him hard, and reel him in. He is too small to trifle with. Well done; four minutes, or less."

"That horrid gaff!" said Rose.

"Wait a moment. I thought you might not like it. I have my big net," and so in a moment the

pretty five-pounder was in the boat, and had his *coup de grâce.*

The next half-hour Rose fished hard, but in vain, and began to be weary. Then, at last, there was a huge splash at the utmost limit of her casting distance.

"Two fish was after that fly," said Michelle. "Guess they run against each other."

"Let out a little line," said Carington.

"But I can't cast that far. Won't you, please?"

"Certainly." And, standing, he threw off two or three feet of line. The leader and fly dropped far away, straight from the rod. At last, after many casts, he put on a fly well known to anglers as a "fairy." The fish rose, missed it, and then, following the retreating line, struck savagely.

"Up anchor!" cried Carington, as he sat down, giving the rod to Rose.

"Big one that, sir," said Michelle; and, as he spoke, the salmon darted down-stream, the men in wild excitement, and the canoe swiftly urged in his track.

"The salmon seem fond of going to sea, Michelle. It is very rare, Miss Lyndsay."

"Oh, he will have all my line! What can I do?"

"Tip up! up! He must run, and he will." And away they flew.

"Quick, Michelle! I have twice seen a salmon run off a reel." And now, in fact, there was very little line left, when, after nearly half a mile of rush down-stream, the fish turned and ran toward the boat.

"Lost? No! Nothing is ever lost — reel! reel! — except by people who ought to lose. No, reel! reel!"

And poor Rose, at the limit of exhaustion, obeyed till her arm ached, and the perilously long loop of line at last became tense, and the fish showed himself in one great leap not forty feet away.

"He 's beat!" cried Michelle. "Easy, miss, easy. Have to gaff him, sir."

"All right. What 's the matter with him?"

"Hooked foul, sir. Ah!" And, amidst splash and laughter, and much water over Rose, the prey was hers.

"What does he weigh?"

Carington took the spring-scale. "How is it, Michelle?"

"Thirty-eight pounds, miss, and a beauty. A half-hour we was, I guess."

"I congratulate you. Are you tired?"

"Tired? No, I am exhausted. I really don't think I can fish any more. Won't you?"

"Suppose we pole up a mile or so, to the upper pool. I 'll cast a little, and then we can drop down and meet Mr. Lyndsay."

"Certainly. I, at least, am satisfied."

"Up-stream, Michelle." And the poles were out, and they went away slowly up the watery slope.

"Do you mind talking at the back of a man's head?" said Carington. "I might have shifted the chair, and my own position — I will, if you like."

"No; it has its advantages," and she laughed, remembering another occasion.

"Such as —"

"I leave that to your imagination."

"I have none."

"Then to your reason."

"Gone! Retired from business."

"I found it advantageous — once."

"You mean when I was bowman. I thought I was to be forgiven."

"I distinctly said you were not, and that I should reserve the matter for future consideration."

"But the advantage was all on my side."

"Thank you. I suppose because you could not see my face."

"That is simply a diabolical explanation. I hope you may lose your next fish."

"Don't. I can bear any form of malice but that. I have gone salmon-mad, like the rest of you."

"I retract," he said. "Is n't this hunting and fishing instinct curious? I suppose it got ingrained ages ago, in the days when our forebears were getting their daily diet by the use of the club and spear. If you could shoot, would you like that?"

He did not want her to say yes, and she did say, "No; I set my sporting limits at the salmon."

"That is to say, pretty well up the scale. I confess that for me salmon-fishing is the noblest of the sports."

"Why is it? For myself, I like it; I hardly know why. But I want to hear why you speak of it so warmly. You shoot, of course?"

"Yes. All manner of things, when I get the time. As to this fishing, I don't think I spoke at random. It requires some skill,— not too much, or too intense attention. One is free to mix it with a book, or with deep thinkings, or with the laziest mind-idleness. Then, too, one's curiosity is kept up by the unguessable riddles of the ways of salmon. We know no

more about salmon than we know about — well, I leave you to fill the gap."

"It is easy to guess," she cried, "what the other term of all difficult comparisons is for men."

"Woman, I humbly presume you to mean. Indeed, I at least might be excused if I so said. I have no sister, no cousins, indeed; no mother — now," and he paused. "I am in truth alone in the world since after the war, when I wandered north, a pretty sorry sort of a half-educated orphan."

"And what did you do then?" She felt agreeably the courteous deference of the young man's manner, and liked the brief emotion of his pause as he spoke of his mother, nor less the soft Southern accent.

"Oh, I got work on a railroad as a chain-bearer, and worked up until I made a little invention, which I sold, and with the money I went to the Troy scientific school. It was pretty tough, because I had to do double work on account of my want of early training. However, I got through."

"And then?"

"Oh, then I was employed as an engineer, and, by and by, the firm I am now in took up some of my new notions about bridge-building. I ought to ask pardon for talking about myself. I really think it was your fault."

"I am not over-penitent. I think, with my father, that the lives of men who succeed are interesting."

"Have I succeeded? I suppose that fellow Ellett has been indulging you all with my virtues and capacities."

"Perhaps!" And now a look at the face would

have been desirable. He said no more for a moment. Then Miss Lyndsay went on:

"You were about to say—"

"No, I was not. Yes, I was. I was about to say that success in life means many things. Material success I have had. There are other successes. I have by no means all I want."

"And what else do you want? Immaterial success? I hardly know what that is; but one can't be consistently wise."

He laughed. "Oh, I am a fellow full of wants."

"Do you get what you want, as a rule? I sometimes envy men the battles of their lives."

"Yes, mostly I get what I want. When I want things, I so terribly want them that not to win is — is unpleasant."

"Oh!" she cried, "did you see that salmon jump? I should like to be a salmon, just an hour, to know why they want the fly. They don't want it to eat, do they?"

"No. But also we ourselves want many things which we can't eat."

She laughed outright, which is at times provoking when the face is invisible.

"It is my turn now," he said. "What amuses you?"

"Nothing!" This was hardly true. She was mirthfully overcome at the idea of Carington as a salmon, and somebody casting a fly over that curly head. "Oh, nothing."

"I know better," he said.

"Indeed? What kind of a fly would you advise as a lure to a human salmon?"

"That is a pretty serious question. It is to be a male salmon, I presume. What would I rise to? Money, good looks, character, position."

"I might suggest a killing combination fly," she returned.

"That reminds me pleasantly of my old guide, Tom Dunham, who used to go with me on Lake Superior. He was an old beaver-trapper. Once I asked him how he baited his traps. He said, 'Women beavers is easy satisfied with one thing for a bait, but men beavers is best took with two or three kinds, all just sot to one, in a bait.'"

"I don't see the moral."

"Oh, that is a matter of choice. The beaver, once in the trap, has leisure to select the moral."

"Rather. How interesting these guides must be! The lonely life in the woods must result in the making of some singular characters. Or do they all become dull and taciturn?"

"Some do. Tom was a most amusing person. I remember we were lying one night at the Pictured Rocks, on the south shore. I can see now the dim line of cliffs, and the camp-fire, and the loons on the lake, taken by the broad red band of ruddy light flashing far over the waters. Tom was talking beaver. At last I told him a beaver story out of one of Buckland's books. It does n't bore you?"

"Oh, no. I love stories."

"Well, once on a time, when folks wore beaver hats, an ancient beaver sat on a dam, and discoursed wisdom to a young beaver. Presently came floating down-stream a beaver hat. 'What is that?' cried the

young beaver. Then the old beaver wiped his eyes with his long, hairy tail, and said, 'My son, that is our grandfather!'"

"Delightful! Do tell the boys that."

"Tom considered this incident in silence until at last I said, 'Tom, I don't suppose you believe that story?' 'Well, now,' says Tom, 'that just shows you don't know nothin' about beavers. In course he knowed his own granddaddy.'"

"That is really charming."

"Oh, here is the pool." Their places were now shifted, Carington casting over Miss Lyndsay. For an hour he fished in a distracted way, to Michelle's disgust, for the fisherman sat for the most part, and paid less attention to the fly than to the back of Miss Lyndsay's neck, and a pair of delicately modeled ears, and the most distracting lot of hair, which had been disturbed in her casting, and in and out of which two hands were busy with mysteriously guided efforts at readjustment. Also, he wondered how much of a woman's nature one could learn from these limited opportunities.

After a good deal of talk, with some dangerous intervals of silence, he gave up fishing, saying, "It is no use," and ordered the anchor up. It was now toward evening, and they were off and away to meet Mr. Lyndsay at the beach.

"Don't paddle," said Carington. "Keep her straight; that is all."

He was more than willing to lengthen the time of their too brief voyage. Both seemed inclined to the lonely satisfaction of silent thought.

As they neared the Island beach, Rose said, "I have had so delightful an afternoon that I almost forgot mama's message. I was to ask you to come down to-morrow — no, Monday — night, after dinner, and Mr. Ellett, of course. We will try to show you what silly folk we can be. We are guilty of much folly, I assure you. We will play 'Situations'—we call it 'Plots.'"

"What is that?"

"Oh, you will learn — and charades, I dare say."

"It looks formidable."

"It is — it will be. I have to get even with you about that bowman business."

"But I am reeking with remorse."

"I don't believe it. By the way, in my moistened haste, I gave you my luck-piece, my dear little gold dollar."

"Well."

"I want it back."

"And my pay? I do not work for nothing."

"You shall have a big silver dollar."

"No, that is worth only eighty-five cents: pure swindle that!"

"But I want it."

"I like that."

"I shall never rest till I get it."

"I am so sorry."

"But I really don't care."

"That is a relief to my conscience."

"Oh, Pardy! I have killed a grilse and a thirty-eight-pound salmon."

"And I nothing. Mr. Carington must have or-

dered all the fish up-stream. Might I ask for some water?"

"Yes. Michelle, get a jug fresh from the spring. Come to the tents. Alas, Mr. Lyndsay, to-morrow is Sunday — no fishing."

"No, indeed. How good that water is! Rose, you might take that grilse to Mrs. Maybrook to-morrow."

"I will, unless it is too hot. Good-by, Mr. Carington. How comfortable you look here!" They were now in the dinner-tent. "And books! You are worse than Aunt Anne." And they went away.

Carington watched them from shore as they hailed Ellett, who went by them with three good fish.

"Now," said Carington, "if it is cool in the morning, I shall go to see Mrs. Maybrook, to pay for the milk; and if it is warm, I shall go in the afternoon. I hope the thermometer will be definite."

CHAPTER XIX

N this Saturday evening, while Rose was relating her day to Aunt Anne, Joe Colkett sat, meditatively, astride of his wood-saddle.[1] In the morning he had seen Dorothy Maybrook, and had been as cunning as he knew how to be. He had found Dory engaged in "p'inting her man," as she said; he was to saw some wood, and to kill two chickens for Mrs. Lyndsay's table. "Now, two p'ints, Hiram, two!" The pale, square-shouldered man considered her with dull eyes.

"You said two pairs."

"Oh, you are not p'inted right yet. Don't you kill more than two chickens. Here," and she set two pins in his sleeve, "you can look at these."

"There, one pin stands for each chicken," he said. "Guess I 'm p'inted," and he went away.

"What 's wanting, Joe?" she said. "How 's Susie?"

"Oh, she 's kind of upsot. She takes on 'bout that last boy like there was n't a boy on airth."

"There is n't for her."

"There 's no gainsayin' that. She 's allus a-talkin' about them Lyndsays, and how they sot a stone, a right handsome stone, up on that there boy of theirn,—

[1] The cross-pieces on which wood is laid for sawing.

and she ain't got none. Women 's awful queer, Dory. I can't buy no tombstone."

"It does n't seem so queer to me. Can't you get some kind of a thing, just to please the woman? Why, if it was only of wood, you see, it might help."

"That 's so. I was a sort of thinkin' 'bout that. Queer how folks thinks 'bout the same things."

"Were you? Well, you 're a better kind of man than I took you for, Joe Colkett. Your wife 's about half off her wits with grieving. If I was you, I would n't — well, I would n't take her too serious. People that are troubled the way she is do have strange notions. I think the devil he 's as like as not to get a grip on us when we are —"

"What was you a-thinkin', Dory?" he broke in, suspiciously.

"I ain't fully minded to tell you, Joe. But Susie 's a masterful woman, and don't you let her get you into trouble. If it 's money, my man and me we 've got a little put by. I 'd a heap rather spend a bit of it than see you tormented into some wickedness."

"You must think I 'm right bad, Dory. Can't you talk out?"

"No; I might, but I won't. Only you remember, Joe, I did n't say you were bad, but I do say anybody you care for might p'int you wrong. It 's a queer thing how easy men can be p'inted."

He was terribly scared, and, seeing that no more was to be had out of Dory, resolved to profit by her warning. How she could have guessed anything of his or his wife's intentions he was at a loss to comprehend. But he was timid, and eager to steer clear of

trouble. After a few moments of silent consideration, he spoke:

"It ain't always easy to keep straight. Guess I 'm p'inted now, like Hiram," and he grinned. "I don't drink none neither, not now."

"Stick to that and keep your mouth shut, or it may be worse for you—and for Susie, too," she added.

"I will. Don't you be afraid."

"And what fetched you, Joe?"

"I was minded to set a nice clean board over them boys. I was a-tellin' you that. And I can't read none nor write. But if you was to write big on a paper just what a man might want to set on a board like I was a-talkin' of, guess I could copy it plain enough."

Dorothy considered. "Can you wait? It 'll be quite a time."

"Yes, I kin wait."

She left him, and went into the house, and was gone a full hour. What the man thought of as he leaned against the rails, or sat on top, I do not know. He had the patience of an ant.

When he saw Dorothy again at the door he climbed down, and, with some excitement in his face, went toward the cabin.

"It was n't right easy, Joe. I was thinking I might ask Mr. Carington about it. Mr. Lyndsay he 'd be best; but I guess I would n't ask him."

"No," said Joe, promptly. He saw why this might not be well. "I don't want nobody to know, Dory, 'cept you and Susie. It 'll kind of surprise her, and she 'll like it." Then he added, with some cunning,

He 'll work for it all day — and smart! Why, he 'll be into your truck-patch and out, when he sees you, before you can turn round. He knows what he wants, and he goes for it; and he knows when he 's stealing as well as you or me. I hate to hear an animal called pig-headed because he don't mean to be ordered here or there by a fellow that has n't got half his will or half his brains. There!"

"Gosh, Dory, but you 're a funny woman."

"Am I? There is more than fun in that sermon. Look here; this might do." And, as he came near and stood with huge square hands on the table, she spread out the sheet of paper.

"Can't you read any of it, Joe?"

"Not no word of it. I might know the letters — the big ones."

He looked at it as a scholar might at some papyrus in an unknown language. "You might read it," he said.

Upon this, with a finger on each word, as she went on, and with his eyes following it with interest, she read slowly:

"HERE LIE THE BODIES
OF
SUSAN FAIRLAMB,
PETER FAIRLAMB, AND
ISAIAH FAIRLAMB,
CHILDREN OF SUSAN AND
PETER FAIRLAMB."

"I guess I 'd leave him out," said Joe, straightening himself.

"But children must have a father."

"There ain't no need to say it, though, Dory. Susie she won't like it."

"Well, it is n't my tombstone," said Dorothy. "He was n't much use to them when he was alive; we 'll leave him out." Untrammeled by the usages of the world, she put a pen through the statement of parental relation.

"What about the dates — the days they died, and their ages?"

"Derned if I know, except about Isaiah. It don't matter none." He was reflecting that the work before him might be reasonably lessened.

"It really don't matter," she returned. "But, Joe, don't you want some verse out of the Bible? They most generally do put that."

"It makes a heap of work, and my knife ain't none too sharp. Make it short, anyways."

Certain grim texts came into Dorothy's mind, but she set them aside. At last she wrote:

Of such are the kingdom of heaven!

and repeated the phrase aloud.

"That 's as short as you could make it?" he said.

"Yes. Do you come down to-morrow morning — no, on Monday. I 'll baste four big sheets together, and print it all, the size you will want it. Then you can easily copy the letters. How will that do?"

"First rate. I 'm awful obliged to you, Dory."

"Can Susan read it?"

"Well, she can manage to spell it out; and you 'll read it to me a couple of times, so I 'll be able to tell

CHAPTER XX

JOE went home, and, as he approached, saw the woman, his wife, at the wood-pile. One foot was on a log, and, as she struck, she swung the ax with the ease of habit and of strength. Joe stood a moment thinking what a fine, big creature it was. He admired the physical power and the dexterity of this gaunt being, to whom unkindly time had left none of the fair curves of her sex.

Once he had humbly wondered why the tall and still handsome Susan had given herself to him; but for years he had too well known her motives, and slowly, by degrees, there had been revealed to his simplicity the true nature of the wife he had taken. It did not destroy, it scarcely lessened, his attachment. The poor fellow had by birthright a great fortune in capacity to love. No one had cared for him, and when he found this single love of a sad life, it was not in his construction to be capable of change.

"Halloa, Susie! Why, I 'll do that!" he cried cheerfully.

She stopped short, and, turning, faced him. "You ain't man enough even to cut wood for a woman." And again she struck to right and left with masculine

vigor. "Get out, or I 'll let you have it," she said, whirling the ax around her head as he fell back. And still the vigor and force of the woman pleased him, despite the sense that he was being ill used.

"But I 've been doin' somethin' for you that 'll please you a heap."

She ceased to chop as he spoke, and, standing, faced him.

"You can't fool me. You 've been after drink. I know you. Get in and make the bed, it ain't been made all day; and there 's a pair of socks needs darning." She laughed. "Pretty dear, he is!"

The sarcasm was thrown away. He stared at her a moment in dull wonder, and went in, and tossed up the pillows, and turned the corn-husk mattress, and propped a broken chair against the wall, and did his best to make it all look like the neat order in Dorothy's cabin. Next he took a half-loaf of stale bread, and went out the back door and into the woods.

It was now dusk. Avoiding the road, he strode with a woodman's skill through the deeper forest, over a hill-top, and thus down to the river, and so at last found himself above the clearings. Here he came upon the dugout he had hidden in the alders two days before. He got in and poled up-stream in the darkness, passing the burnt lands, and coming at length to a deserted flat. It had once been a good pasture, but some change had taken place in the channel, and now in the spring the waters always went over it. Where coarse undergrowth had sprung up, the ice of the April floods had torn long lanes

of ravage. The dead or half-dead bushes were bent southward, and weighted with a ragged tangle of leaves and twigs caught in the angular branchings of the stems: a desolate place, and wild enough in the uncertain evening light.

Beyond the ruined cabin, which the changes of the river curves had made untenable, he crossed the inland road. He might easily have come by it, but had wisely avoided even this small chance of being seen. On the farther side was an oblong, white frame-building, the Methodist chapel. Once in a month it was used in its turn for service by the lean minister. It was likely that no one would be near it for two weeks, and, in fact, here the road ended.

Joe got over into the graveyard and looked about him. There were three or four heavy slabs of gray stone, and a dozen or two of unmarked graves, over which he stumbled with a curse. He looked around and listened. Only the hoarse roar of the rapids reached his ear, and he saw the moon just over the tree-tops. The light aiding him, he came at last on the simple, white, upright slab set over the child's grave. He seized it, with no hesitation, and began to rock it sideways, to and fro. At last it was loosened, and, with no more thought than he would have given the felling of a pine, he tore it out, and with difficulty hoisted it on his back, and set out toward the river. It was easily lifted over the low stone wall of the graveyard, but as he set it on the top of the fence beyond the road, and began to climb over, the rail broke and he fell, the heavy marble tumbling on his foot so as to cut the instep. He sat down,

with an oath, and took off his boot. He was in great pain. The boot was torn, as he found, and half full of blood. It was an hour before he could get it on again and walk at all.

At length he got over the broken fence, thinking only in his suffering of the woman and how she would like what he meant to do for her. Twice he failed to lift the slab onto his back, and twice lay down beside it, overcome by a strong feeling that after all he might fail. At last, in such extremity of pain as would have conquered most men, he got up, and set his teeth, and resolutely took up his burden. It must have been the most intense hour of a life without power to call up the past by means of pictures, for, as he staggered through the gloom, sweating with effort and from increasing torture, he was given a brief moment when he saw Susan as he first knew her, a slim, strong, young woman, with the emphatic beauty of anger upon her. It made him stronger, and he went on. At last he reached the dugout, and saying, from mere habit, "Thank the Lord! I done it," he sat a while with his foot in the cool river water.

It was true that at no moment had he felt the terrors which few had escaped in the lonely home of the dead he had robbed. Now he was at ease and assured of success. He laid the stone in the boat. As he stood an instant in the gloom of a profound stillness, a cold gust of wind came down from the hills, and, with wail and roar in the pines beyond, swooped onto the level, and for a moment shook life of movement into the dead gray streamers of moss and the

hanging wreckage of torn underbrush. The next moment all was still again. It is not a very rare phenomenon, but he might not before have given it attention. Somehow its unusualness impressed him, so that he shivered as he felt the momentary coolness, and with this came the familiar notion of his childhood that a dog was crawling over his grave. He jumped into the pirogue, shoved it off, and was at once away in the current. As he sat down, with his paddle in hand, he reflected that the white stone was full in view and that some one might by chance be out with a drag-net poaching. He put into shore, and carefully covered the stone with ferns. There was, of course, the risk of a river-warden's inquisition, but he knew when the rounds were made, and so ran on fearlessly, keeping a sharp eye ahead.

No one troubled him. He got ashore near his cabin, and still in the utmost pain, resting often on the way, carried the stone to the wood, where, in secure remoteness from his house, he could go on with the needed work. On his way homeward he picked up two steel traps as an excuse for his absence.

When he entered the house it was early morning, and, to his surprise, he found Susan afoot. Her habit was to lie abed until Joe had been up some time, kindled the fire, and perhaps even had set the frying-pan to heat, and made tea, which she was accustomed to drink in excessive amounts. On other days, of late, she was apt to lie abed still longer, to refuse food, and decline to take the least notice of Joe. For him these moods represented the mother's grief. If he did not fully comprehend it, he at least tried his

best to disregard the inconvenience thus added to his wretched life. His canine simpleness craved mere affectionate regard, and in its lack, and the undefined misery this caused him, the woman possessed a deadly weapon. And now, on this occasion, to his surprise she was up, and his sorry breakfast of stale bread and bacon ready.

Of trees to fell, or quality of rafted lumber, he knew enough to be a good hand in the woods or on the spring drives, but naturally enough was unobservant of people. Nevertheless he noticed that his wife had on a not uncleanly gown, and a bit of worn ribbon, and had set her unkempt locks in order.

"Law, Susie, you look right slick," he said.

"Been after the traps, Joe?" she said, glancing at the rusty irons in his hand. "Get anything?"

"Guess so. A mus'rat and a wood-chuck."

"Let 's see." He went out and brought them in.

"Chuck 's good and fat, Susie, and I know where another one lives!"

"Just ain't he fat! And the rat-skin?"

"That ain't much."

"But it 'd make a nice purse if there was any money to put in it."

"That 's so, Susie."

"But we 'll get something to put in it," she said, setting her large red eyes on the man, and speaking with cold cheerfulness.

"Yes," he returned hastily. "I 'll get a job up river soon. Them Boston men 's set on buildin' a house. Thought I 'd see 'bout gettin' on to that."

"Is Carington comin' to hunt caribou?"

"Don't know rightly. He ain't said nothin', 'cept last week. I ain't seen him since."

"He 'll come, I guess, Joe, and then, if you 're a man, there 'll be a chance."

"Yes, yes," he said anxiously. "Time 'nough."

He was dreadfully scared. He felt that he might be made to do anything.

A smile crawled sluggishly over her face. "That 's so. But the thing is to get your mind set to it. Might happen a good chance any day."

He was too simple not to show his fear, and she was quick enough to see.

"You trust me, old man, to fix it, and there won't be nobody 'll ever guess who done it."

"You ain't called me your old man, Susie, this two year," he said. "Now don't you go for to want me to do somethin' like that."

"There ain't no harm in considerin' things, Joe. Everything 's just gone against you and me, and if a good chance was to turn up — a right safe one — I guess you 'd not be the man I took you for if you don't just grab it."

"Well, we 'll see," he said, eager to get off the subject. He had become set in his mind as to this matter, and meant somehow to escape the toils she was casting about him. "What 's for breakfast, Susie?"

"Oh, that old hen 's took to layin' again. There 's eggs and bacon, and I done you some slapjacks."

"That 's good. I 'm hungry." As he passed her to sit at the table he kissed her. "Why, you look right pert to-day."

"Thought you might be a-spyin' round Dory. Got to keep an eye on you fellows," and she laughed. Manufactured laughter is a dreary product; but it answered for poor Joe as well as the most honest coinage of a merry heart. It set him at ease for a time, and they ate, while the woman tried to revive for her victim the coarse coquetry of her younger days, when she attracted or revolted men as their natures chanced to be.

CHAPTER XXI

LYNDSAY had set his heart on a second Sunday morning on the river, with Rose and the trees. She readily gave up her proposed morning visit to Dorothy, and said the afternoon would answer. Miss Anne thought she herself was strong enough for the party, and Rose, much pleased, set about arranging her cushions in Tom's canoe.

"We will be back to lunch, mama," said Rose. "It is early. Will it rain? It looks hazy."

"It is smoke, Rose. Some far-away fire. Where are the boys, Tom?"

"Up-river, sir, with the Gaspé men."

"Who gave them leave to go?"

"You, papa," said Rose. "I suspect they have gone after those unhappy hornets. They were up and away long ago. They asked you last night."

"Did they?"

"Yes; you were deep in a book, and said 'Yes, yes,' in your dear old absent way."

"I am sorry. Mama thinks it a naughty amusement at best, and when there is also the additional naughtiness of battle on Sunday! Well, they will be properly stung with remorse or hornet-fangs, or

a combination. The wounded will be pardoned, I fancy. Hey, Rose?"

"Like enough."

Mrs. Maybrook's vivid account of Susan Colkett's talk with Joe had made on Lyndsay at first a strong impression of disgust and annoyance. He saw in it, after cooler reflection, only one of the numberless beginnings of tragic crime which are refused the prosperity of opportunity. We have no proverbial wisdom as to what place bad intentions go to pave; but those who see much of the darker ways of man are well aware that there is much intended evil, as well as intended good, which never gets beyond the egg of theory. The crime which Susan Colkett was nursing with the devil-milk of base use of a man's honest love grew less momentous to Lyndsay as he considered it. Once suspected, it became to him almost childlike in its foolishness. Crime-seed, like the grain of the parable, falls everywhere. There is a human climate in which, above all others, it finds swift maturity of growth.

Susan Colkett was by nature inclined to evil. She had base animal cravings, liking high colors and coarse meats. A want was with her at once a fierce hunger of desire, and made temptation dangerous to one who had in its crude fullness brute courage, and that dreadful alliance of the sensual with the destructive instincts which is more rare in woman than in man. But of Susan Colkett's personality Lyndsay knew almost nothing. He was, however, by no means indifferent as to the matter, but had simply put off speaking of it to Carington for want of an easy chance.

As they came opposite the Island Camp, Lyndsay said abruptly:

"Run her up onto the beach, Pierre."

"Are you going to stop? I wish you would n't stop, papa. We have a very short time to-day."

"I shall be back in a moment. I have been putting off a little matter of — of business with Carington. I shall not be long." Meanwhile Anne Lyndsay's canoe also came to shore.

Rose said no more. She saw her father disappear into the tent, come out with Carington, and begin to walk to and fro on the upper slope. Very soon she began to be curious, as she saw them pause and turn and go on again.

"What are they talking about, Aunt Anne?"

Miss Lyndsay looked up from a book. "How on earth, my dear, should I know?"

"But are you not curious?"

"Yes, I am always curious — as to the good, and as to the bad, and as to everything in between."

Rose laughed. "That covers the whole possibilities. Here they come. Now I shall know."

"I don't think you will."

"A pair of gloves to a pound of bonbons."

"Done, goosey! Whom will you ask?"

"That is my business. There was no limit of time."

"None! But you will lose. Your father looks solemn, and Mr. Carington like a sphinx."

"Given two men and one woman, aunty, and a thing to find out: that seems an easy equation."

"I see the unknown quantity written clear on both faces. You won't win."

Carington stood a moment in gay chat with Rosé. Then Lyndsay said:

"You won't come with us?"

"No; not to-day." His question was settled without the thermometer. He was clear enough as to the indiscreetness of a useless morning with Rose and two others, and a meeting at Mrs. Maybrook's in the afternoon. He would abide by the later chance and its less distracting accompaniments.

"We shall look for you both to-morrow," said Miss Anne Lyndsay. And they poled away up the river, while Rose talked to her father, biding her time to win her little bet.

Anne, lying in her own canoe, and very comfortable, fell into amused reflection. If books were what she dearly loved and closely studied, she had a no less active fancy for that rarer occupation, the serious study of the human face. It is a difficult branch of observation, because one may not too often or too attentively examine the features of those with whom we are in immediate social contact. Like her friend, Dr. North, she preferred on the whole the critical study of women's faces. She declared that only these repaid attention, and that the hirsute growths of men were, like the jungle, useful for the concealment of animal expressions. She remarked with interest that Carington lacked this partial mask, and said to herself, "That man has something on his mind. Is it about what Archie has been telling him? I shall ask Archie." Then she went back to her book, which was her favorite "Reisebilder."

In the other canoe, Rose had brought the talk

around several sharp corners, and at last, having no better chance, said:

"You looked worried, Pardy, or so very grave, when you were talking to Mr. Carington. Has he been naughty, papa?"

"No."

"Well, what was it? You both seemed so intent."

"Allow me, miss, to ask if interest in me, in Mr. Carington, or in the unknown is at the thriving root of your evident curiosity?"

"In you, Marc. Aurelius."

"That is pretty clever, miss. Permit me to reply, in the language of my namesake, 'Mere curiosity is like a road which leads nowhere: what profits it to go that way? Also as to things it may be well, or as to those in whom we have an interest, but not as to the horde of men.' Now, as you have expressed no interest in it as a thing unknown, and none as to Mr. Carington, or mankind, and as it concerns him chiefly, I shall forever after hold my peace. You lost your chance."

"Give me another."

"Not I."

"But I made a bet with Aunt Anne."

"Then pay it. Have you exhausted your feminine arts?"

"All — I give up; but I mean to know. I shall ask Mr. Carington."

"I would n't do that, my dear child."

"Oh, Pardy! How you rose to that fly! Imagine it!"

"You minx! Halloa, Tom! Hold up a moment.

Drop anchor here. I want to stop." They were near to the farther bank. "Here, Pierre, put your canoe alongside. Are you all right, Anne?"

"Perfectly."

"I want to show you something before the sun is too high. Can you sketch here, Rose? The boat is pretty quiet?"

"I am not sure; I can try."

"How much darker it is, Tom!"

"Yes, sir. It 's the smoke. It 's been about a bit for a day or two. Now the wind 's to south, it 's gettin' kind of thicker. There 's a big fire somewhere."

"How far?"

"Might be a hundred miles away. 'Heap big smudge,' Polycarp says."

"Look now," said Lyndsay. "Try to get me these water-tints. Take a bit of it."

"I can't. What makes these colors? They are beyond me."

"The sun must be back of you; the water near you — that is, you must be low down. Then the stone-tints of the river-bed are caught by the many changeful mirrors of the surface. It is, as you see, pretty well wave-broken here. Also, the general color is that of this yellow-red gravel slope opposite, mixed with the green of the trees."

"Then," said Anne, "it gets color — surface color — from within, and also from without, like one's personality."

"That is it, I see," said Rose. "But the blue in the waves is so deep — deeper than the sky. It is intense indigo. More heavenly than heaven."

"Yes, that is so. It is because, as we partly face the current, you look into the concavities of thousands of waves, and each condenses, so to speak, the blue of large sky spaces. Am I clear?"

"'Each nobler soul inherits heaven's largeness,'" quoted Anne.

"Thanks, aunty. The greenish gold of the surface is the color of the bank, made also deeper in hue because of being caught on the myriad rippling of the water."

"Good, my dear."

"How beautiful it is!—the flashing cupfuls of blue in among this bloom of green and gold. No one could paint it."

"It is best at evening, Rose, but not at this point. There is a place some miles up where the general surface is silvered by a mass of white or light-gray granite, and in this you have set again the numberless wave-shells of indigo-blue—a dance of blue in silver."

"Is n't that smoke getting very much thicker? The colors are less brilliant now."

"Yes, ma'am. The wind blows it up the gorges. Happen might smell it."

"I do," said Anne. "One can hardly see the farther hills."

"Some men," said Lyndsay, "fancy that it affects the fishing unfavorably; but two years ago, on the Cascapedia, the water was so saturated with smoke as to be undrinkable, and still the fish rose well. I wanted to study with you again, Rose, the purple color of the dead trees above us; but this smoke will somewhat affect it."

"Let us get on to the beach, papa." And in a moment they were seated on a log, Anne lying at ease beside them.

"It gets still more dense, Rose. We must give up the water. Sketch that sprawling dead pine yonder; it seems reeling back, and the one in front looks as if it had just hit it."

"How droll, Archie!" said Anne. "May I talk, or will it disturb the higher art?"

"No. Talk as much as you like. No one could be cruel enough to deny you the safety-valve of talk."

"If you had said no, I should have wanted to talk. I am now perversely inclined to silence."

"It is a self-limited disease with you, Anne."

"Thank you! I was wondering a little whether you were right about the use of minute observation of nature by the poets. Rose told me what you had said. It was, I think, that Wordsworth was apt to be over-credited with this faculty, and that others have had it far beyond him."

"Yes; it is the spiritual use of what he saw that is his distinctive quality. I think he carries that at times to the utmost endurable limit — even to near touch of the absurd."

"That may be so. I think the limits of acceptance depend on one's moods. Of course, too minute notice in verse of natural peculiarities may be possible. Now, these colors — how could one put them in verse?"

"Oh, aunty, you forget:

> 'A silver plane of fretted gold,
> Set thick with shells of violet blue.'"

"That is mere description, Archie — good enough and true; but what I mean is that accurate description does not, as a rule, consist with poetry. The best of it seizes a single trait, and with it links some human emotion. You can't catalogue in verse, as Walt Whitman does."

"My dear old Walt!" said Lyndsay. "I am thankful for what he gives, and do not quarrel with what he does not. I am inclined to think that he will outlive some of his seeming betters. I have been more than once struck, in talking with him, by his entire unconsciousness of the fact that, while he believed himself to be the poet of the masses, he found his only readers among the most cultivated class."

"Could I read him? You said once that I could not," said Rose.

"He is hardly *pueris et virginibusque*, my dear; but his later editions are fairly expurgated of what had as well never been written. Anne will give you his great poem, 'The Dream of Columbus,' and 'The Convict,' and 'My Captain,' and 'When Lilacs Bloom.' A friend of North's once gave Walt, through him, a check which he much needed, asking in return an autograph copy of 'My Captain.' He took the gift with entire simplicity, and sent two copies of that noble verse. He was the most innocently and entirely vain creature I ever knew. The perfect story of his vanity will, I fancy, never be written. It was past belief."

"What a fine head he had a few years ago," said Anne.

"Yes; he was a great big child, and he looked then like the Greek busts of Jove."

"He should always be read aloud," returned Anne, "and read, too, with a little contribution of rhythmical flattery. If I were Mr. Ellett, I would say, 'Now, that is n't at all a bad remark.'"

"You appear to have said so, Aunt Anne."

"I have. If I were a poet, I would set over my verses, 'Read this aloud'; or, 'Read this to yourself'; or, 'To be read under a tree over a woman's shoulder'; or, 'With a pipe in autumn.'"

"What a nice idea, aunty! When you were talking just now of the use of natural descriptions, I meant to tell you what Mr. Carington said."

"Well."

"He said it seemed to him a fine and artful thing in Shakspere to set amidst the crime of Macbeth all that prettiness about innocent nature; the description of the martlets and the castle, you know."

"It is true," said Anne. "It is quite true. Does the young man talk well? I am not sure that his remark is new; but no matter. How little of one's talk can be that!"

"I thought he talked fairly well. He did not say it was his own thought."

"No matter. It is *ben trovato*."

"I think it was his own," said Rose.

"Oh!"

"How the smoke still thickens, papa! And the water is now a green bronze."

"Yes, and the sun — Here is my word-sketch: 'Eleven A. M. Sun over and back of me. Air full

of smoke. Hills a delicate, airy blue. Sun orange-red, with a blur of yellow around it. All shadows on gray sand a faint green. Delicate opalescence on smooth, slightly rippled water. Deep purple reflections of dead trees. Sense of strangeness — of mystery.'"

"That is almost as good as a picture, Pardy."

"At early morning here," he went on, "the river-bed is full of mist. The combination of this with smoke gives some very weird effects. If we have a bright yellow sunset this evening, the dead trees on the hilltops will be of a pure orange tint."

"I shall imagine the morning colors," said Rose. "I am like the salmon. How they are rising now!"

"Yes; and so is my appetite. Shall we go? It will be lunch-time before we get back."

"And this is our last Sunday on the river for this year," said Rose.

"And perhaps my last for all years," thought Anne; yet what she said was this:

"I have been trying to make out, Archie, why water is such a lovely thing. Why is it?"

"I don't know."

"Nor I. It is the one thing in nature which has moods for me,— I mean many moods. Then it is the one natural thing which has something like laughter."

"Time writes no wrinkles, etc.," cried Rose.

"And it has no memory or record of its works. Is that part of its seeming joyousness? And never — never is in straight lines."

"Rather obvious that, Anne."

"But it was n't obvious to me a half-hour ago. I am pleased with my discovery. Don't tell me Ruskin

has said it. I know he has not, or if he has, he had no business to have said it, and you can't patent ideas."

"But Anne—" Lyndsay began.

"Don't, Archie. I am not to be contradicted today."

"I was going to agree with you"; and he laughed. "May not a fellow even agree with you?"

"Certainly, if he agreeably agrees with me. There are—oh, there are hateful ways of agreeing with people."

Then Rose was about to mention Mr. Carington's use of the word agreeable, but refrained, she did not know why. She caught the words about to issue out, and put them back into a corner of silence, and did say:

"What you say, Aunt Anne, of water reminds me of what Mr. W. said about a picture, last spring, of great war-ships coming through a mist toward us. It was rather fine. But the water was set in such stiff, orderly billows that Mr. W. said, 'Yes, Britannia certainly has been ruling the waves.'"

"I had forgotten it," said Anne. "Now I remember that our English friend did not capture the meaning."

"Oh, no. Really, Pardy, it sometimes makes life hard in England, this sort of inaptitude to turn with quick apprehension from grave to gay."

"It would suit your mama. I am not sure that I like our unending tendency to see things or put things in ridiculous aspects—no, not just ridiculous,—help me to a word; not funny, either,—some-

where among the lost words, the verbal refuse-heaps of Old English, there must be the word I want."

"We know what you mean," said Anne. "I agree with you. Our newspapers are every day painfully funny for me. To deal all the time with the serious so as perpetually to make it seem trifling by putting it in comic guises is to damage one's true sense of humor."

"And of the serious, which is worse," said Lyndsay.

"And, Archie, I don't like the constant misuse of words it brings about. I don't like to lose respect for words. I don't like their characters taken away, so as to unfit them for their next place. Words have duties."

"That is all true, Anne; but if we begin to abuse newspapers, we shall never get home. And they are so infallible, confound them!—an absolutely honest confession that they have told what was not true is the last thing you can get out of them. The editor who would not contradict a false paragraph as to a man's death is a good example: he offered to put in a statement of the man's birth! Let us go home."

Laughing, they pushed off, and, soon lapsing into silence, slid away down the dancing rapids, under an ever dimmer sunshine, as the smoke grew more and more dense. Now and then Lyndsay saw something to remember in wood or water, and made brief note of it. He had a mind some day to make a small book about word-sketching. Probably he would never do it; but it is pleasant to pet our little enterprises, until, maturing in thought, they get too large for the mother-lap.

Rose watched the amber waters, and then, furtively, the Island Camp, where was noontide quiet, and no man in sight.

The two canoes were held together as they ran down-stream, and only now and then a guiding paddle was used.

"You have had a nice little nap," said Lyndsay.

"I have," said Anne. "I am the only person I know who will admit to having slept in daylight. I slept little last night, and — is n't it droll? — I took just now into my sleep a queer little bit of the Orient. I think it is rare to carry one's thoughts with one unbroken into the land of dreams. But I did, and I went on dreaming of it."

"What was it, aunty?"

"Only some stuff out of the 'Legenda Aureata.' It would not interest you."

"Anne!" "Aunty!" they cried. "It used to be El Din Attar, and Hafiz. Now it is the 'Talmud' or the 'Golden Legends.' You are a horrid humbug," added Lyndsay.

"You are a dear, sweet, altogether nice humbug," said Rose. "What was it?"

"Then listen, children. When Adam and Eve were turned out of Eden, they could get no sleep, because of their tears — for when tears part the lids what man may slumber? Therefore all night long they complained. After awhile the birds flew up to heaven and said, 'We have done no wrong, neither have we eaten of the tree, nor do we know good from evil. Yet these two keep us awake with their cries.' Then the Christ came down to help them, and, com-

ing to Adam, said, 'What is there thou wilt give God for sleep?' And Adam said, 'We have but one thing left us: we will give love.' And the Christ said, 'It is enough. Forasmuch as even the kings of the earth receive no gift without returning a better, therefore for thy love thou shalt have God's larger love and also sleep.' So the man and the woman slept, and the birds had rest. And it was said later, 'He giveth his beloved sleep.'"

"Is n't it pretty, papa?"

"Rather. But, Anne—"

"I am sleepy," she said. "By-by," and she pushed their canoe away. "Let go, Pierre; I want to go to sleep again."

"Was it out of some book, Pardy?"

"Gracious, Rose, how do I know?"

CHAPTER XXII

HE Sunday stillness of the Island Camp was broken by lunch, and after it Ellett thought he would go down to call on the Lyndsays, and perhaps Fred might like to go with him. But Fred had letters to write — he was too lazy — he wished to finish a novel. However, he wrote a note to Mr. Lyndsay, to say that on Thursday he meant to go down the river to Mackenzie to see a man about a cabin he desired to have built on the Island, and would call to ask if Mr. Lyndsay still wished him to have a check cashed at the bank, in order to pay his men. Also, he could then arrange for the tickets and sleeping-car accommodations Mr. Lyndsay's family needed on their return. And thus, having secured the absence of Ellett, he saw him depart, and for an hour or more smoked, and diligently struggled with a book by a sadly literary woman who was contributing her feeble ferment of doubts to enliven the summer moods of man and maid. At last he rose, pitching the book across the tent, and said aloud:

"There was a young woman of Boston,
A blanket of doubts she was tossed on;
Four fiends who were scorners

Had clutch of the corners.
They tossed her so high
That she stayed in the sky,
And doubts the existence of Boston.

I forget the other nine verses. Michelle, halloa! Put me across!"

"Pshaw!" he exclaimed, as he strode through the summer woods. "I hate books which land you in the country of nowhere." And he thought, smiling, of the famous Eastern tale of the caliph and the philosopher: "Who are you?" said Haroun. "I don't know." "Where are you going?" "I don't know." "Where are you from?" "I don't know. I write books; what about is for him that readeth to discern. To know nothing is the Path of Negation by which you attain knowledge of the infinite Nothing." "Then," said the caliph, "in the language of El Din Attar, 'One serious conviction is better than armies of denial: more wholesome is it to believe in Satan than to deny God.' In order that thou mayest abide on the seat of wisdom for a week and acquire one earthly certainty, thou shalt have the bastinado!" "Where did I read that stuff?" he thought, and went along, humming snatches of song, his own or others, for he scribbled a little, and had some musical touch of the light grace of the song; but "intended no monuments of books."

The woods soon brought back to him the mood of contentment, which is one of their many mysteries. The most delightful possibilities are those which never occur, and of these the woods are full. The delicate sense of something about to happen began

to possess Carington. He went on his way, smiling, and now and then stood still to touch a tree, or notice some unusual giant, or to note some singularity of limb or bole.

An hour or more of sharp walking brought him to the cabin of the Maybrooks. It was closed. He passed around it, and saw no sign of its inhabitants. He knocked and got no reply. Then he said a naughty word, and went and sat down on the edge of the well and reflected. He was more disappointed than he felt willing to admit. By and by he acquired wisdom, and went to the brook, where would have been the grilse if Rose and her attendant had come and gone. Seeing no fish lying in this cool larder, he felt better and went back to the well. There doubt awaited him with the possibility of Dory having gone to the Cliff Camp, which would have made needless Miss Rose's intended visit. He had been stupid in not anticipating this contingency. At least he would wait awhile.

And now there was a sudden gleam far away among the trees, unseen by this young man who was gazing down into the cool depths of the well. Had he looked that other way this flutter of color in the trampled ox-road would soon have become to him a pink muslin gown. The wearer carried a basket in her right hand, and in the left, swinging it gaily as she walked, a broad straw hat. At the wood skirt she paused to change her burden to the less tired hand,—for she had been of a mind to come alone, and now found her five-pound fish to have gained in weight. As she looked up, she was aware of Mr.

Carington seated on the edge of the well, his back toward her. He was singing:

Oh, merry 't is in proud La Moine,
I hear my glad heart sing;
The flag is up, the fleet is safe,
And the blessed church-bells ring.

Oh, here 's a kiss, and there 's a kiss,
For you, good northern wind,
That brought our fishers home again,
For you left no soul behind.

And here 's a kiss, and there 's a kiss,
Because my heart is glad;
And there be twenty dozen left,
And my sweet sailor lad.

He sang with little art, but with every word clear, and as a man alone sings for company of sound.

Rose stood still and heard it out, liking it, but hesitated a little, half hid behind a huge pine,—a pleasant picture of a maiden struck shy of a sudden. What had happened? There is a little timepiece which Cupid winds up. It ticks quietly, and by and by strikes a fateful hour, or we take it out to see how goes the enemy, and behold! it is to-morrow. Love is the fool of time.

Rose stood a moment, as I have said, not forty feet away, a little inclined to retreat,—aware that, if detected, this would mean something, she knew not what. At last, seeing the need of action, she made a strategic movement to left, and said, "Are you looking for Truth?"

"Good heavens! Miss Lyndsay," and he rose from his seat on the edge of the well. The prettiness of

the picture struck him as Rose came forward: the pink gown, fresh from the looms of fairy-land, set fair against the greenwood spaces, the faint excess of color in her cheeks, and the look of unconsciousness which goes surely with natural distinction of carriage.

"Did you come up out of Mother Earth? Are you sure it is you?"

"I am. I came over to give my grilse to Mrs. Maybrook."

"Our grilse, you remember."

"I do not; but it is no matter. I came to give Dorothy the grilse."

"She is not at home. Let me take the basket. I will put it in the brook. Did you carry it?"

"I did. It weighs—I assure you—twenty pounds! I must see it bestowed." And she followed him into the wood along a narrow path to a basin of brown water. The stream crawled forth here from under a fallen tamarack, and seemed to hesitate a little in the pool below. Then it gathered decision for flight, and leaped out, tripping across the tangled roots as it went. Carington laid the fish in the water, and two stones upon it.

"It is cooler here than outside," he said. "Dorothy will be back in a little while."

After this outrage on truth, he added:

"I came over to pay my milk-bill."

Then Rose, of a sudden remembering what she had said the day before as to this errand of hers, became at once conscious of being in the country of a pleasant enemy. Therefore she made a neutral remark as she looked about her:

that I have gained something. She is in a real sense influential."

"It seems odd, or perhaps it is not, but she has the same effect upon me. I hardly fancy that in her class you could find this creature repeated."

"She has a similar effect on Ellett, and human nature does not repeat itself. I mean that even the type is rare. It is purely natural,—owes little to the education of events."

"Yes, rare in all classes, I should say. My Aunt Anne is in some ways queerly like Dorothy."

"Indeed?"

"As I am like Jack. You may smile,—I am. Yes, and that makes me think of Jack. Poor fellow! he fancies you utterly despise him."

"No? Does he? I will ask him to go after a bear with me. I was quite too rough with him, but really —— However, I do not want to talk about that horrid morning. I thought he was splendidly courageous and equally outrageous."

"There is courage and courage."

"Yes, of course. It admits of analysis. I am often a coward myself; I am desperately afraid of some things."

"Of what?" she said, smiling.

"I will tell you some day. It is not well to tell a woman everything; one loses interest as one satisfies curiosity." He was on thin ice now,—but ice it was, as he found out,—what Jack would have called tickly benders.

"I have no curiosity,—none at all. I think I must go," she said. "I really must go," and she rose, adding, "There is Dorothy, at last."

He was as much relieved as she. He had seen but little of this young woman, and his reason told him clearly enough that he had been near the crumbling brink of folly, and that he had better be careful. He also rose, and they went over to the cabin, where Dorothy greeted them. It was not possible for a person as shrewd as Dorothy, knowing what had passed on the beach with the bear, not to have some notion of what it might lead to in the future. She had in her a fine feminine spice of romance. Now she said, in her quiet way, "Good afternoon! Did you happen to meet my Hiram?"

"No," said Carington.

"I brought you a grilse, Mrs. Maybrook. It is in the pool."

"I am that obliged to you. Guess I 'll smoke it, if it is n't too big. Come in. I just pulled some roses for Miss Anne. I 've got them inside. You might take them along. I 'll have to look up Hiram. Come in." They followed her.

"Here is your money for the milk," said Carington, "and very good milk it is."

"My old cow ought to have her share, but she won't. I guess we none of us know when we get our fairings. She won't know any more than the rest of us. Did you walk down, Mr. Carington?"

"Yes."

"Come by Joe Colkett's?"

"No; I took the lower road."

"He was here yesterday. You would n't guess in a week of Sundays what for. He wants to put a wooden slab over those poor children,—just to please

"Reckon I 'm too old." And she stayed in the doorway of her poor little home, kindly, by no means unhappy, and giving the benediction of a smile to these two people in their youth of health and prosperity and love. "I guess he 's p'inted already," she said, as she stood.

Rose turned at the wood-skirts, and nodded good-by. The parable of the roses had been by no means meant as such, but neither the maid nor the man at her side failed to capture the possibilities of its meaning. They walked on in silence for a while, she with a faint hope that her companion had not been as apprehensive as she, and he, a little amused, and with a not unpleasing impression as to the slight embarrassment which, despite her training, Rose had betrayed when their eyes met a moment while Dorothy was speaking.

"How silent we are, Miss Lyndsay!" he said at last. He might have taken it as a sign of their growing intimacy.

"And do you object to that? I like it sometimes. I like that about the well-bred English. They talk or not, as they want to. We seem to think it socially criminal to keep quiet. I like to feel free to talk or not to talk."

"And are you not?"

"Yes," she said, and then felt that the little monosyllable was more or less an admission, and so there was a yet longer silence. But one may be silent too long, and Rose spoke:

"What you said to Dorothy made me think of a quotation with which Aunt Anne puzzled us last

night. Her quotations and my dear papa's Marc. Aurelius we are always doubtful about."

"What was it?"

"'He who speaketh out the evil of his soul is at the gate of wisdom.' She declined to explain it, and vowed it was out of a Hindostanee poem; but as to this you need never quite trust Aunt Anne. I was on the point of quoting it just now, but did not, because I fancied Dorothy might not understand it."

"Do you?"

"No," she laughed; "not I."

"She would have been sure to say something droll. I wish you had quoted it. I am glad you do not understand it. I do not. It might have several meanings. But I don't like vagueness in prose or verse. If the thought is worth stating, I think it must be worth the trouble of stating it clearly."

"Pardy—I mean papa—insists that vagueness of language always means mistiness of thinking."

"I hardly go that far. There are many explanations of the vague in statement. A man may think with decisive sharpness of result, and be quite unable to word his conclusions. But we are in deep waters."

"Quite too deep. As to quotations, I like to think with Aunt Anne that they are all in the dictionary, and so cease to bother myself with the source."

"Assuredly that saves trouble. Ah, here is the river," he said. "Am I not to have a rose?"

"Is that a quotation, Mr. Carington?" and she laughed. "That is silly enough for ball-room talk."

"It has been said pretty often, and at all events is not vague."

"I am not sure men ought ever to have roses," she cried, gaily; "but, as I am not sure, here is one. I will not act on my vagueness."

"Thank you." He held it a moment, and then quietly dropped it into the pocket of his jacket, not unperceived by Rose.

"Ah, here is my boat," she said; "good-by." As they stood on the bank, she looked hastily over at the cabin and saw no one in sight. Then she stepped into the canoe, where Polycarp sat in tranquil patience, and the young man, lifting his cap, walked away into the woods.

Gay comrade thoughts and fancies went with him on the way, and, light of heart, he guided himself by the yellow lanes of sunshine which lit the open forest before him. Soon he found the lower road, and, still smiling, moved on more slowly, and took to building castles on those great estates in Spain to which he had just fallen heir.

"Seen my cow, Mr. Carington?" said a voice, a few feet behind him, and the sweet prosperity of fancy was gone. It was Susan Colkett who spoke. He started. He had heard no step, as she came out of the wood, although she must have been very near.

"No; I saw no cow. Is yours astray?"

"Yes. What time might it be?"

"Six o'clock," he replied, looking at his watch.

"Do you think to come up here in September, sir? Joe says caribou 's plenty up the river."

Then Carington recalled Mr. Lyndsay's warning, and said, "It is hard to say as yet. Most likely I shall not."

"I did hear there 's bears back to the pond. If you was minded to go after 'em, Joe he 'd like to guide. There ain't no better hunter."

"I 'll see about it. If I want him, I shall let him know. Good night." And he left her.

After walking some thirty yards he looked back. The woman was standing in the road, tall, angular, and large, a long crooked stick in her hand. She was watching him, but instantly moved as she caught his glance.

"Confound it," he muttered, "if I believed in the evil eye, and were a good Catholic, I should cross myself."

Then he tried to think again of Rose Lyndsay, but, failing to command the return of his broken day-dream, he went on more swiftly, and once or twice turned again, with inexplicable unease, to look back to where he had seen the figure of the woman set against the darkening greenwood. "Pshaw!" he exclaimed.

CHAPTER XXIII

HEN on her return Rose went into their cabin she happened to glance at the clock. Then she said:

"What time is your watch, Aunt Anne?" Being told, and discovering that the two timekeepers were unanimous in opinion, she smiled a little, and went on into her own room. Here she went straight to the small mirror and—why, who shall say?—inspected herself briefly, saying, aloud:

"You were a rather big fool, to-day, Miss Lyndsay, and next time you will have your own watch."

Presently, remembering what he had done with the rose, she concluded that men were hateful. She had seen a good deal of the world, and had had her full share of earnest admiration at home and abroad, so that she was by no means ignorant as to the cause of the gentle tumult in her bosom. She wanted to wish that this man would let her alone, and be but a friendly and pleasant companion. Also she more sincerely desired that the race of bears had been omitted from Noah's menagerie.

At last she made her toilet, and went out to dinner, where Dick asked, with cruel promptness, why she had not brought that big Boston man over to dine.

"Because I did not ask him."

"That 's not a reason, Rosy," said Ned. "I wish he had come."

"And I don't," remarked Jack.

"Why not?" said Lyndsay, coldly.

Jack flushed as he caught Anne's eye. "Oh, you can't like everybody."

Anne said, in a quiet aside, "Jackey, your giants are not all dead," and he was silent.

"Mr. Carington was at Dorothy's when I got there. He came to pay for the milk they get. By the way, papa, he told me to say that on Thursday he had to go to Mackenzie, and that he would call as he went by and get the draft you wanted cashed, and please to leave word how you wanted it. Oh, I forgot, he said afterward that you could tell him to-morrow night; and, Pardy, he wants you to let Jack go with him on Friday, to look for a bear they have seen some distance back of the camp, above the burnt lands."

Meanwhile Anne was quietly glancing at her niece's face. Now this proposal was fire-hot embers to Master Jack.

"Oh, I can't go! Hang bears!" he said.

"He did not tell me to tell you, Jack; but he did say he had been hard on you, and I think so, too."

And now Anne Lyndsay put on her glasses.

"Well, Jack," said his father, "how is it?"

"Am I to take my rifle, Rose?"

"Yes,—I think he said so."

"His trust in this family must be large," said Lyndsay.

"Do you think I ought to go?" said this young hypocrite.

"Yes, but don't shoot him!"

And now Rose was dreadfully aware of her aunt's inspection, and made haste to add, with embarrassment more felt than seen, "What a budget! Oh, I quite forgot, Aunt Anne, I took your roses into my room. Dorothy gave them to me for you." As she spoke she left the table, and, returning, put the flowers by her aunt. "I was to tell you there were only half a dozen," and here she made a full, though brief, stop; "but that it was all she had. She seemed to think it hardly worth while sending so few. You know how nice she is; but, dear me, I have made a speech of congressional length,—and I am so hungry!"

In fact she had talked at the last with accelerated speed, having made, as she well knew, a sad blunder into undesirable arithmetical verities.

And now Lyndsay said, "It was very kind of Carington. You must be quite exhausted by the carrying of so many messages!"

"It is n't all," said Rose; "Mrs. Maybrook wishes to borrow the book, Pardy, in which is the history of Mrs. Macbeth."

"Indeed!" he returned; "that is droll," and fell to thinking.

Then Mrs. Lyndsay said, "You must be very warm, dear: you look quite overheated."

Here Anne let drop her eye-glasses, and began to consider the number of her roses, but said nothing.

On Monday, after a most successful day on the

river, in which both camps had nearly equal good luck, the two men from the island came down in the evening, through a fine moonlight, to the lower camp. They were now in that easy stage of acquaintanceship with the Lyndsays when people begin to make agreeable discoveries as to other people who are common friends.

Carington watched his chance and caught Jack alone.

"You are going with me, I hope?"

"Yes. Papa says he wants me to go."

Carington was very quick to catch the accent of lingering discontent.

"By the way," he said, "I was rather sharp on you the other day. I don't want you to think I thought you did quite the right thing; but I liked your pluck, even if it was out of place, and I understood the temptation. Suppose we forget it all. Be ready on Thursday night — pretty late. I shall get back here by eleven, I hope, and will pick you up. I can give you a bed and a blanket, and early Friday we will be off for a day. I can't promise you a bear, but I think we shall both like the tramp."

"I 'll be ready, and I 'm much obliged, too."

Jack was enchanted, and by and by confided to Rose in a corner his exalted opinion of Mr. Carington, nor was he altogether satisfied with her "Oh, yes, he 's quite a nice kind of a man."

"You were to have seen, Mr. Ellett, how foolish we can be," said Rose, as they stood by the door. "I also promised Mr. Carington that experience."

"And are we not to have it, after all?"

"No. Papa and I had arranged some very neat situations for your discomfiture; but papa finally decided that they were too difficult, or at least needed some preparation."

"But I should really like it. I can do a little at it myself, and Fred used to be a very clever actor. But, then, he does so many things well. Do you do many things well?"

"Everything," said the young woman. "We do everything well here in this family, even to liking our friends better than other people like their friends."

"Don't you think our friends' friends are often great troubles? I think a fellow's friends ought not to have any friends. That is, a man's friends should not be the friends of his friends. That would n't be so bad now, would it, if it was n't a bit mixed?"

Hearing Rose's merriment, as poor Ellett endeavored to untangle his sentence, Anne and Carington turned to join them.

"What is the fun, Oliver?" said Carington.

"I 've made an overrun," said Ellett. "When I try to talk too fast, I am very apt to do it."

"And what is an 'overrun'?" asked Anne Lyndsay.

"When you are casting for striped bass, the reel runs very easy, and the bait is heavy, and if you don't check the reel with a thumb, as the line runs out, and then stop it as the bait drops on the sea, the reel runs on, and the line gets into a tangle, such as is really unimaginable. It takes hours to get it clear. Hence Ellett's comparison."

"That is a noble idea," cried Miss Anne. "An intellectual overrun!"

"You see," said Ellett, much pleased, "everything is underneath that ought to be on top, and the inside of the line gets snarled in loops of the outside, and there 's a sidewise tangle, and—"

"Would n't it be advisable to stop at this point?" said Fred.

"Should n't wonder." And he reflected upon the excellence of his comparison.

The night was clear and pleasant, and, as they talked, they went out and sat on the porch, where presently Lyndsay joined the group.

"Miss Lyndsay," said Carington, "tells us you gave up the plots. I am not too sorry. How do you play the game?"

"Oh, two or three of us devise situations, and when we announce them, the others act them. It is an Italian game, I believe, and quite amusing. You may treat the situations seriously or lightly. It is easiest to keep to the key-note on which you start, and not try too hard to be funny. Puns and quibbles, coming in of a sudden, disturb the other actor, unless he be well used to it."

"I never pun," said Anne; "but to be forbidden I regard as an invasion of human rights."

"Oh, they are not forbidden!"

"Then they should be, except to Wendell Holmes. Only the worst puns are endurable. When Alice Fox told Dr. North his horse 'Roland' was well named, because he was to carry good news to Aix, I considered that the climax of verbal murder."

"No, there is a worse one," cried Rose; "but that I shall never, never tell."

"Pardon me," said Carington, "was not Mrs. Fox that delightful widow with the pleasant name,—I recall it now, 'Westerley,' Mrs. Westerley? There was some queer story about her wanting to marry a country doctor who came to grief, or did some queer things, I forget what."

"Yes; she married Colonel Fox, at last."

"Married once," said Lyndsay, "engaged once, and at last lucky enough to capture that fine fellow. How many love-affairs she had in between—who shall say?"

"And a sweeter, better woman never was," returned Anne. "I could explain her life; but I have no mind to betray the secrets of my sex."

"She attained wisdom at last," said Lyndsay, "for I heard her tell Fox once that married men should have every year one month for a bachelor honeymoon."

As they laughed, Mrs. Lyndsay, who had just come onto the porch, said, "That is like her; but I do think it is only an echo of the discontent with our decent, old-fashioned notions as to marriage. I hope, Rose—" and here Mrs. Lyndsay stopped short. Anne looked up.

"The recipe seems to work well. They are very happy. I propose some day to start a company to insure the permanency of the married state. It ought to pay. They insure everything nowadays, from boilers to window-glass," she added.

"That 's so," said Ellett. "Now, the interviews of

the examiner of that company with the young couples would n't be a bad situation to play."

"Admirable," laughed Lyndsay.

"But don't you want to hear our plots? You will see what you have escaped."

"By all means," replied Carington.

"Well, here is one. Mr. Sludge, the medium, calls up Shakspere to ask if he wrote Bacon's essays."

"If that is a specimen," cried Carington, "I still less regret. The probability of Shakspere having been in Bacon's pay as essayist strikes me as a delightful alternation to put into the Shakspere discussion."

"It is a trifle tough," said Anne. "I should like to ask for it at the next spiritual *séance*. I myself am strongly of the opinion that Queen Elizabeth wrote Shakspere's plays. Just turn some of her correspondence with James into blank verse, and see how dramatic it is, and how humorous."

"Repeat some of it for Mr. Carington, aunt," said Rose. "It is really interesting."

"Certainly, if I can recall it. Ah, here is one. I have made but little change in her words,— hardly any:

> 'I praise God that you uphold ever a regal rule.
> Since God then hath made kings,
> Let them not unmake their authority.
> Let little rivers and small brooks acknowledge
> Their spring, and flow no further than their banks.'

"There is another:

> 'Else laws resemble cobwebs, whence great bees
> Get out by breaking, and small flies stick fast
> For weakness.'

"I like this one," said Miss Anne:

"'For they be actions rather, and not words,
Which paint out kings and truly in their colors.
There be so many viewers of their facts
That their disorders (do) permit no shade,
Nor will abide excuses.'"

"Oh," cried Carington, "that last is like Tennyson. 'The fierce light that breaks upon a throne.' Is there more?"

"Tell us," said Rose, "the one about a treaty — she 'mislikes,' I think that is what she says. I liked that one."

"I think I can:

'Touching an instrument you 'd have me sign,
I do assure you, though I play on some,
And have been brought up to know musick well,
Yet this discord would be of gross account,
Such as for well-tuned musick were not fit.
Go teach your new raw counsellors better manners
Than to advise you such a paring off
Of ample meanings.'"

"How pleasantly that takes one back to *Hamlet* and the pipe!" said Lyndsay. "It ought to settle the question of authorship."

"I begin to agree with you, Miss Anne," said Ellett.

"Don't forget to ask your medium about Queen Bess, aunty," cried Rose.

"I? Indeed I shall."

"Have you any belief in that business of spiritual manifestations, Mr. Lyndsay?" asked Carington.

"None. Not I. It is one mass of self-deceit and fraud. I have seen too much of it."

"I have a strong belief in the circulating medium," cried Anne. "It seems rather essential as a means of inspiring the other mediums. But what are the rest of your situations, Archie?"

"Oh, there is one more Shaksperian situation."

"Well."

"Mr. Shakspere appears at midnight in Mr. Browning's study and asks what the mischief he means by—"

"For shame, Pardy!" broke in Rose; "we won't hear any more. They are horrid."

"I guess we are out of it," said Jack. "I 'm audience."

"Oh, there is one for you. The ghost of a murdered bear appears to Master Jack Lyndsay and wishes to know if he can spell 'responsibility.'"

"Good for you, Jack," cried Dick.

"Wait till I catch you to-morrow, Redhead." But there was much laughter, and Jack felt that on the whole it was not undesirable for his bear to pass into the limbo of jokes.

"And now, boys, be off with you and dream over that last situation. Good night," and they trooped away, merry, to their tent on the cliff.

"Jack is a very good actor," said Lyndsay; "but children are apt to be fairly good actors and then to lose the gift. Ned is even better. The boys are fond of charades, and what we like best is to take the names of poets from Chaucer to Crabbe,—we have pretty well exhausted the list."

"I have seen in France," said Ellett, "a harder game than your plots. Two or three scenes are allowed,

and what each is to include is stated. Then the actors endeavor to go through with each act so as to fulfil its dramatic purpose."

"I trust," said Mrs. Lyndsay, "no one will introduce that game."

"It would be charming," cried Rose.

"Come in, Archie," said Mrs. Lyndsay, "and let us have our piquet. Anne and Rose will furnish quite as much talk as will suffice. I must have my revenge."

"Certainly, my dear," and he went in with his wife.

"Some time we must really try those plots," said Rose. "Papa is too fond of the difficult ones. Imagine *Hamlet* furnishing evidence to the Psychical Society about his father's ghost!"

"Does any one believe in ghosts nowadays?" asked Ellett.

"Pardy does,—look!" she said, laughing, and pointing through the open window. Lyndsay was pushing off from a burning candle the tall spikes of wax which stood unmelted on one side. "We are laughing at you, papa," she cried.

"Are you?" he said, turning from his game. "I can't stand a ghost in the candle: it is another relic of my Scotch education, Mr. Carington. It is bad luck to have a ghost on the candle. I have lost the belief, but the habit remains."

"I fancy we all keep some of these little pet superstitions," said Carington.

"I assure you, we are rather proud of ours," returned Anne.

The chat went on, grave and gay by turns, and at last Lyndsay came back, saying:

"I retire after a sad defeat."

"My papa plays cards abominably, Mr. Carington. He writes verses better."

"Rose! Rose! None of that nonsense."

"The fact is, when we were talking about the charades of poets' names, I meant to repeat the endings papa made for some of them, but, when I mentioned it to him, he shook his head like a China mandarin, and I weakly gave up. He is doing it now," and she laughed. "Oh, I am even with you at last, Pardy, because you left me yesterday in the anguish of ungratified curiosity. This is my vengeance."

"It is incomplete," said Carington.

"Blush, Pardy, but tell us the verses." Lyndsay declared that the verse was hardly worth a fight.

"I can recall only two," he said. "Here is one:

The fight was lost. On hill and glen
Thick lay the ranks of fallen men;
And sullen through the narrow gorge
Went back the standard of St. George.
Then in the saddle rose the 'Squire,
And shook his pennoned spear on high,
And called his broken band again,
And taught them how to die,
And won a name, and little knew
That where his country's banner flew
By hill or dale, on ocean blue,
In centuries to come,
That name the lifted pennon won
Should live as deathless as the sun.

"Of course these words were meant only for the children," said Rose; "I like this better:

A Smith who beat the gold of song
To voices pleasant, sweet and strong:
What royal jewelries he wrought
With simple words and kindly thought!
A careless, foolish, wasteful soul,
Too fond, alas, of pipe and bowl;
Vain of his looks, his waistcoat's set,
Oppressed with duns, o'erwhelmed with debt,
Crushed with distasteful Grub Street work,
The friend of Reynolds and of Burke,
He smiling bore the gibes of Johnson,
And loitered in the shop of Tonson;
And well or ill, or drunk or sober,
In youth or age's drear October
Went smiling, jesting, laughing through,
If friends were false or friends were true.
And fared he well, or fared he ill,
Left but kind words to greet us still,
And modest humor's gentlest play,
That bids no maiden turn away,
And many a cool, clear, ringing line,
Still heard through all those noisy years,
And wholesome as a wayside spring,
And sweet with smiles, or sad with tears."

"That is really a nice bit of character-sketching," said Carington, as he rose. "We must try the postponed plots some other time."

"I think my father and you and Mr. Ellett could manage the ghost scene."

"Perhaps we may have a chance next winter," he returned. "I have a bridge to build near your good city, and shall certainly see you all as I go and come."

Rose made no reply. The gap in the talk was filled by Miss Anne:

"That we shall be glad of."

"And," added Lyndsay, coming out, "we shall hold you to it. There is a little old Madeira still left."

"Your fellows in the war drank all that would have been mine," said Caington. "You owe me principal and interest."

"We shall be honest; and we shall look to see you also, Mr. Ellett," said Rose.

"Good night." And they went to their boats. As they poled away in the night, Carington said to himself, "If those railway directors but knew it, I would pay for the privilege of building their bridge. However, skew bridges are difficult: it will take a good while." And he lit his pipe.

"What are you thinking over, Fred?"

"Oh, about the difficulty of constructing a cantilever skew bridge."

"What a word! Good gracious! It suggests a dreadful pun."

"Don't," cried Carington. "Come alongside, and give me some baccy."

CHAPTER XXIV

HERE was something pitiful to Dorothy in the eagerness with which Joe received the inscription, which she had carefully printed on four sheets of foolscap basted together. She read it to him, over and over, that Monday morning, at his request, until he could repeat it easily.

Before going home he looked up Hiram, and borrowed a cold chisel and a hammer. When he reached the wood where he had hidden the stone, he laid it down, and, without further thought, began to chisel out the few sad words in which the graver of the city workman had recorded the fate of Harry Lyndsay. This was sufficiently easy, as he made rough work of it, being anxious to get to the more difficult task.

He had reflected a little as to the risks of some one visiting the little burial-ground up the river, but, as those he knew thereabouts did not trouble themselves to visit the graves of their dead, it did not occur to him that these city-folks would be any more likely to do so. Nor was it any more probable that, far away in the depth of the forest, anybody who was interested would ever come upon the burial-place of Susan's children.

"Would n't know nothin' if they did," he said to himself, as he went on with great care to mark with a burned stick the place for the lettering, which he began now to chisel on the smooth reverse of the marble.

It was a hard job, but Joe, like most lumbermen, was very skilful with tools. He returned after dinner, and steadily persevered until the twilight forbade him to go on. Susan, still in her more pleasant mood, was satisfied that his absence meant merely the continuance of the usual labor of accumulating fire-wood for winter use.

On Tuesday, early, he went back to the unaccustomed task, and all day long hung anxious and sweating over the stone. Meanwhile Margaret Lyndsay sat on the porch of the Cliff Camp, reflecting that soon she must go away and leave her dead to loneliness and the long burial of the winter snows.

On the river Lyndsay was fishing with Anne, and Dorothy had been over, and taken away, carefully wrapped in her handkerchief, the drama of "Mrs. Macbeth."

And still the hammer rang on in the dark woodland, until at evening his task was completed. Joe stood up, straightened his tired back, and considered the stone with satisfaction. The work was roughly done, but sufficiently plain, nor was Joe disposed to be too critical. At last here was something which Susie would like.

Pleased with this idea, he brought water from a forest spring, and sedulously cleared the marble of the charcoal-marks and of the soil of his handling. As he stood regarding it, he even felt pride in his

seeming power to read what he had carved, and repeated aloud, "Of such are the kingdom of heaven."

It was now late, and with deliberate care, lest his burden should fall, he heaved the slab on his back, and set off across the forest, limping as he went. When he reached the three small mounds in the clearing, he laid it down with care, and, after some deliberation, dug a hole and set the stone at the head of the middle grave. Having thus completed his task, he wiped his wet brow on his sleeve, and sat down on a stump, with his pipe in his mouth.

He intended to let the night go by, and, after breakfast next day, to take his wife to the wood, and surprise her with what he had done for her. He would tell her he had a secret; he would say it was something she would want to have done. But he would not tell her what it was. He was like a great simple child; unthoughtful, owned by the minute's mood or need, not immoral, merely without any recognized rule of life.

As he regarded what he had done, he began to think that to bring her hither at once would be pleasant. He could not wait. The notion brought him to his feet, and he soon gathered the material for a fire, which he placed facing the stone, a few feet from the graves. The space around was amply cleared, so that there was no risk. This done, and the pile ready with birch-bark kindling, which needed only to be lighted, he turned away and hastened home.

It was now dark. As he entered his cabin he saw his wife crouched low on a stool before the fire, her head in her hands, her hair, which was coarse and

abundant, hanging about her—a comb awry in its tumbled mass.

He guessed that her mood had changed. She took no manner of notice of his coming. He moved forward, and, touching her shoulder, said:

"What 's the matter, Susie?"

"Matter enough!" she returned, sharply. "That lawyer man 's been here, and wanted you. You ain't never to hand when you 're wanted."

"What is it now?"

"He says we 've got to pay up or git out in October. Guess he got my mind 'bout it. I 'd have licked him if I 'd been a man. He was n't far from scared, anyhow."

"That won't help us none," said Joe, with a glimmer of good sense. "He 'll be wus 'n ever he was."

"Who cares?" Then, turning, she set her eyes, aglow with the firelight, large, red, and evil, on Joe. "That man Carington was around to-day, asking if we 'd seen bear-tracks. Bill Sansom told me. He did n't come here. I did see him yesterday, on the lower road, a-twiddlin' a gold watch-chain and a-singin'. What might a big gold watch be worth, Joe? I asked him the hour, just to git a look at it."

"Lord, Susie, I don't know."

To this she made no reply. He stood beside her, shifting his feet uneasily.

Of a sudden she got up and caught the man by the shoulders, and, as she stood, towered over him a full foot.

"What—what 's the matter, Susie?" he gasped.

"Git that man up here in September, you fool."

Joe looked aside, Dorothy's imperfect warning in his mind.

"I heerd he 'd give up that notion."

"That 's a lie."

"It ain't! I swear it ain't no lie. I heerd Michelle a-sayin' so."

"When was it?"

"I don't rightly remember. I — I could n't do it."

"Git him here, and I 'll do it," she said. "It 's just to pull a trigger. So." And she snapped her thumb and finger so as make a sharp click. The blood was up in splotches of dusky red upon her angular and sallow face. The man recoiled, more scared at the woman than at the crime which he lacked power to conceive of as possible.

"Gosh!" he cried, "you 're a devil!"

In an instant she was changed. She had a share of the singular dramatic power of the abler and more resolute criminal nature.

"Oh, I 'm just crazy, Joe, what with one thing and another. Don't you never mind me." And a smile, which to another man would have seemed hideous, disturbed her features with unwonted lines. "Might nothin' ever chance. You and me we 'll have to just fight along. 'T ain't every man would have stood by me all along, the way you 've done."

"That 's so," said Joe, relieved. "I 'll work for you, Susie: don't you go to fear I won't. I was a-thinkin' you was 'bout downded all along of them children."

"That 's it, Joe; you 're better a heap than me." She knew, or thought she knew, that if the chance

came she would have the power to compel him into doing her will. There was strange self-confidence in her sense of capacity to hurl this child-man into evil-doing, as one may cast a stone; and now the notion possessed her almost continually. How to do it? how to bring about the occasion? how to escape consequences? The craving for this thing to become possible grew as the days went by. Nor is this abiding temptation rare in minds of her class. I have said that it possessed her, and the phrase suffices to describe her condition. The idea of crime owned her as a master owns a slave. It was a fierce and a powerful nature which poor Joe had taken to his unchanging heart.

"I knowed it was the children. You won't never talk so again? Just you come with me; I 've got something 'll surprise you."

"What 's that, Joe?" She was just now intent on quieting his fears. "Do tell me."

"No! You come along. Looks like rain a bit."

"Well, I 'll go." She threw her hair aside, and went out with him, saying, "You are a queer old man; I guess I 'm right curious." Well pleased, he went along, the woman following.

By and by they came into the open space around which the underbrush grew so close that it would have puzzled one unused to the way to find it.

"You just stand there a bit," — and, as he spoke, he bent over the ready pile,— "and don't look yet," he added.

"What 's that white thing?" The night was dark, and, in the forest, of inky blackness, because of the coming storm.

"You wait," he repeated. "Don't you look yet."

He struck a match on his corduroys, and lighted the birch-bark shavings. Instantly a red light leaped up, and in a moment the flame soared high, flaring in the gusts of wind, so that the tall pines cast all around wild lengths of shivering shadows, and the forest became as day; while the white oblong of stone came sharply out into view.

"I done it," he said. "I done it for you, Susie! I done it."

The woman came near, and, saying no words, fell on her knees to see it better.

"You did that, Joe?" and she looked up.

"I did!"

"There 's letters on it. I can't spell them rightly."

"Dory she made them on paper. She won't know. I told her it was for a board I was thinkin' to set up. There don't no one come here."

"It 's a stone! a real tombstone, Joe!"

"Yes, it 's that."

"What 's on it?"

"I learned it," he said. "It just says:

'HERE LIE THE BODIES
OF
SUSAN FAIRLAMB,
PETER FAIRLAMB,
ISAIAH FAIRLAMB,
CHILDREN OF
SUSAN FAIRLAMB.'

I left out Pete Fairlamb. Seems right, don't it?" he added, noticing her silence.

"There is n't anything about when they was born and died. Any fool would have guessed it ought to have that."

Joe's face fell. After all, he had failed to satisfy her entirely.

"I done my best. Guess my back 's achin' yet with heftin' that stone."

"Where did you fetch it?" she said, looking up.

"I took it out of the graveyard, up-river."

"Why can't you say you stole it? It 's them Lyndsays'." As she spoke the dominant idea which she had so long nurtured rose anew into power. "Well, I did n't think you was that much of a man, Joe." She felt that he had taken a downward step. "You stole it!" she repeated. "You need n't be afraid to tell me."

The words "stole it" disturbed him.

"I stole it!" he repeated, mechanically.

"I don't like it any the worse for that. What 's that last line? Did you say all of it?"

"That 's what Dory said was to be put under the rest. It made a lot more work; but Dory she said they most allus done it like that."

"What is it?" said the woman. "I don't make it out."

He hesitated a moment. "'Of such'—that 's it; most clean forgot it: 'Of such are the kingdom of heaven.'"

As he spoke the drops began to fall. Then an intolerable blaze of orange light flooded the forest with momentary noonday, and, without interval, the thunder, followed by a deluge of rain, and struck

hither and thither by the hills, died away reverberant in the distance.

"Jerusalem! That was a near one! Ain't it a-rainin'!"

As the lightning fell the woman threw up her arms where she knelt and staggered to her feet. "Come along," she cried; and, as she moved swiftly before him in a mighty downfall of rain, she said, over and over, "'Of such are the kingdom of heaven'; 'of such are the kingdom of heaven!'"

When they reached home, she sat down by the fire, as if unconscious of her soaked garments, until Joe, coming in from the cow-house, said:

"You 'd best be gettin' on dry clothes, Susie. You 'll take your death of cold."

"I 'd like them Lyndsays to miss that stone, Joe."

"I hope they won't," he returned. "They ain't never been nothin' but good to folks hereabouts. I 'd not of took it happen there was another; and I would n't have done it for no other woman."

"It was a brave job, Joe, and I 'll never forget it. I wish them other things had been set on it — when they was born and died. It 's only them rich people has things complete. Maybe you done the best you could."

"That 's so," he returned.

CHAPTER XXV

N Wednesday morning, Anne Lyndsay woke up with what her brother called one of the acute attacks of curiosity in regard to Mrs. Maybrook. They were subject to variations and accompaniments. She shared with her friend, Dr. North, the fancy for imagining what certain persons, real or unreal, would do under circumstances which she contrived for them. It was the byplay of a restless intellect. Lyndsay, who was in his professional work keenly logical, had at times no patience with Anne's amusing nonsense. He labeled it "mental vagabondage" or "mind gossip."

She was just now outside in her hammock, enjoying the wonderful weather of a Canadian river in mid-June. She was also busy considering Dorothy Maybrook in a variety of new social surroundings; as to what she would say or do in a drawing-room, or if of a sudden dropped into a seat at a Boston dinner-party, between Emerson and Wendell Holmes. And then she laughed aloud in her satisfaction at reseating her between *Polonius* and *Mercutio*.

"What amuses you?" said Lyndsay, as he came out of the cabin with his beloved "Marcus Aurelius," a finger in between the leaves. "What, no book?"

She related gaily her occupation.

"Upon my word, Anne, I am unable to conceive what pleasure you can take in such stuff." He was in one of his severer moods, when to be merely logical was alone possible. As Anne said, it was pretty hard to switch Archie off on a siding. He had his own moods, gay or serious; but for the time they were despotic, and disabled him temporarily from entering into those of others.

"My dear Archie," she returned, "you have no mental charity; at least, not of a morning. Now, if I were to ask you, to-night, to imagine Dorothy at dinner between George the Third and Edgar Poe, you would just as like as not assist my imagination with an added pair of wings, and—"

"Very likely," he interrupted. "I suppose it is the result of long habit. I came out just now to ask you how this passage strikes you."

She was at once all interest. "What is it, Archie?"

"'Cast away opinion; thou art saved. Who, then, hinders thee from casting it away?'"

Anne laughed, "Try it," she said. "Cast away opinions—have none, and you won't be bothered with the need to trouble yourself with this old heathen's. I agree with him. Opinions are like gowns: it is so nice to change them! I am all the time giving away mine, and it is delightful to see how ill they fit other folk." She was, in reality, of all people, the most definite and clear as to her religion and her politics.

"I think you never can be serious, Anne. Nobody holds harder to their beliefs than you do. I can't

imagine what the old pagan meant. Saved from what? 'Cast away opinion, and you are saved.'"

"It is the salvation of negation, Archie; pretty popular in some places. It is not my kind."

"I shall get no help here," said her brother. "You are no easier to eject from a mental mood than I am. I think I shall give it up and go a-fishing."

"It is my changeless opinion that you are now on the track of reason. The first fish will answer you. He will be quite on the side of Marcus Aurelius, and wish he had not had a too definite opinion as to the desirability of closer relations with a dusty miller or Durham ranger. Get to thee fine opinions, but don't act on them. Thus, thou shalt have the cool joy of theory, and escape the hot results of its practical application."

"On my honor, Anne, you are quite intolerable at times."

"I am to myself, old fellow. I wish aches were opinions. The Christian Science idiots say they are. I would like to exchange aches for opinions."

"Are you not so well to-day?" he said, putting Aurelius in his coat-pocket. "You look much better."

"I am far better than usual," she returned, hastily repentant, as usual, of her admission of weakness or pain. "I am thinking of going over to see Dorothy this afternoon. It is a great enterprise for me, but I really cannot bide, as she says."

"Why not?"

"My dear Archie, she took away 'Macbeth' to read, yesterday, and I must — I cannot wait. I want to know what she thinks of it."

"Indeed! She probably won't think at all. She will very likely give up at the end of the first scene."

"No, I don't think it. After the witches? No! She told me you said something about *Lady Macbeth;* why or when, I do not know. It seems to have made her curious."

"That is rather odd. Does she read much? I should not think it."

"No, very little, and that is why I want to hear. The opinions of people who read too much are not often worth much. But what Dorothy concludes about *Lady Macbeth* ought to be entertaining, at least."

"You can have a canoe, dear, and Tom, after lunch. Are you quite up to the walk?"

"My legs may give out, but my curiosity will not —I can assure you of that. I shall take Ned."

"Very good, then. I am to go with Margaret up to the burying-ground. She wants to see that it is kept in decent order, and to have a better inclosure made."

"Poor Margaret! We go away on Saturday—do we not?"

"Yes, about noon or later."

"I suppose those Boston men will remain."

"Yes, a week or two."

After this she was silent, and her brother, leaning against the door-post, glanced listlessly down the river. She was seldom silent very long.

"Well, what is it, sister?" He rarely used the word of relationship.

"Have you thought at all, Archie, about—Rose and Mr. Carington?"

"Why should I? Margaret has been pestering herself about the man. But Rose is a difficult young woman, Anne, and there have been so many matrimonial scares that now I don't trouble myself any longer."

"Circumstance is a mighty match-maker, Archie."

"But Rose is not, as you know. I sometimes think she will never marry. She is twenty now."

"Indeed! I think, Archie, I should like to have a dictionary of the reasons why women marry men."

He laughed. "The reason is as old as Adam. They have no one else to marry."

"Oh, he had no *embarras de choix*," she cried. "Pity he had not. They are various, I fancy—I mean the honest causes of interest that lead on to love. I have always thought that Rose would be captured by character. In our every-day life it lacks chance of exhibition, but here, it is, or has been, different. That man is a strong, effective, decisive person. He has a good deal that is attractive, and that soft Southern way which our men lack. Moreover, he is very good-looking. If you don't want it to be, take care: *I* think it is too late."

"Anne!" Her sagacity was very rarely at fault. He knew it, and was somewhat alarmed. "But I can do nothing."

"No. I do not know why you should. We know all about the man and his people. Rose is not a girl to act in haste."

"Why, then, should we bother about it?" he said.

"We don't: you will. And Margaret will fuss."

"I am afraid so. Confound the men!"

"If Margaret had confounded you with other men twenty-four years ago, this catastrophe would not have been imminent to-day. Let us hold her responsible."

"You have made me very unhappy, Anne. I can't jest about it."

"Then I can. I think I like him. I wish I had married myself — I mean, somebody else. Old maids are married to themselves, and that is the reason why they have a bad time."

"Do you?"

"Not a bit! Go a-fishing, and hold your tongue."

Lyndsay uttered a malediction on things in general, and walked away.

Some time after lunch Anne called Ned, and went over the river with Tom, who thundered replies to her ever-varying range of questions about climate, lumber, trees, and men. A little later, Margaret and her husband, who had given up for her his evening sport, set out up-stream, and the twins were left to the Indian and a chance at the lower pool.

Anne and the boy climbed up the bank, and went away into the woodland. Several times, feeling tired, she sat down on a wayside stump or fallen tree. She had the peculiar trait of liking to be silent when afoot or when driving. As soon as she was at rest her tongue was apt to be set free, and she became, as usual, a delightful comrade.

Now she began to amuse herself by asking the lad in what age he would like to have lived, and was pleased that he chose the reign of Elizabeth. Then at last she talked about Dorothy, and of her life, its

hardships, trials, and contentments with what she had, and, finally, of the woman's interest in "Macbeth" and her own curiosity as to this. She had the art of interesting the young in matters usually thought to be out of their sphere of comprehension.

As she sat, Ned, who was quick to see, noticed that she became of a sudden silent, and, looking up, saw that her face was distorted for a moment, and that she had one hand pressed against her side. He rose, saying:

"What is the matter, Aunt Anne?"

"Nothing. Nothing much. I very often have pain, and sometimes it beats me."

"I am sorry. Can't I do something?"

"No, dear. It will be better presently. It is better now," and she wiped her brow.

"Why do people have pain?"

"To keep them from eating green apples a second time."

"That 's so, aunty; but you — why do you have pain?"

"Perhaps because my great-grandpapa would eat green apples. 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.'"

"I don't understand."

"No! That is an enigma for more than you. I do not know why I have pain. Having it, I know what to do with it. I don't know why Christ had pain. God might have willed to help us in other ways, but at least I know what to do with the story of that anguish. If he was, as we think, a perfect man, Ned, he must have suffered as only a man who was also

more than man could suffer. As he chose his pain to be, and taught men how to use it, so must I in my small way."

"And would n't you choose, aunty, just to have no pain, if you could?"

"Get thee behind me, little Satan," she laughed. "If I could make a world without pain, would I choose? I don't know. My pain has been a bitter friend. Come," and she rose. The boy, whose thoughts and questions were beyond his years, walked on in silence, now and then glancing at the woman's face.

"Does no one know, Aunt Anne, why we must have pain?"

"Only one man knew, Ned, and he suffered and was silent."

"It seems dreadful, Aunt Anne."

"Perhaps it only seems: best to think that."

At the cabin-door Dorothy came out smiling, the little, red pocket-copy of "Macbeth" in her hand.

"Now this is right good of you, Miss Anne," she said. "Come in. Mrs. Lyndsay was telling me last week you like a cup of tea about sundown. It 's a bit early, but you might be tired. I 've got the tea Mrs. Lyndsay sent me last year."

"I would like a cup, Dorothy. How is Hiram? and the cows? and the chickens? and Sambo, the cat?"

"They 're all well — the whole family."

She set the kettle on the fire, got some bread, cut it up, and set it with a supply of butter before Ned.

"No good in asking a boy if he is hungry."

Ned laughed. "Jack says it is no use for Dick to eat: he is just as hungry when he is done as he was at first."

"'It grows by what it feeds on, like the worm i' the bud,'" said Anne to herself. "I 'll keep that quotation for Archie." And then, aloud, "We old folks eat from habit. The only appetite I have left is for books, and — What good tea, Dorothy! Thanks! Yes, one cup more. My brother says you like coffee better. I sent to Montreal for a few things you might like. You will find among them a small bag of coffee. We think ours excellent."

"And I was just last night a-wondering how I could get some right good coffee. It 's half chicory what we get; and here, in you walk, and I 've got it easy as asking. I have n't said I 'm obliged to you, but I am. Fact is, Miss Anne, giving comes so natural to some folks — you might as well thank them for sneezing. I 'm a bit that way myself. I do just think being thanked is the hardest part of giving. If the man in church was to say, 'Thank you, ma'am,' every time I dropped a sixpence in his bag, he would n't get another out of me soon."

"I am much of your way of thinking," said Anne. "But tell me, what about the book? How do you like it? And why did you want to read it?"

"Mr. Lyndsay happened to say some one was like that woman, *Lady Macbeth*. Guess I called her Mrs. Macbeth."

"And who was the some one?"

Dorothy hesitated.

"I was telling him a little about Susie Colkett."

"Indeed!"

"Yes — she 's an evil-minded one."

Anne had no suspicion of the seriousness of the story Dorothy had confided to Mr. Lyndsay, and was somewhat amused at the remoteness of the tragic comparison. She set the thing aside, and resolved to ask her brother what he meant. She was now instantly curious as to what effect the drama had had upon a woman like Dorothy.

"If Susan Colkett is as bad as *Lady Macbeth*, she must be an unpleasant neighbor."

"There is n't much to steal here," said Dorothy, smiling and looking around her; "and I never did see the woman I was afraid of. As for Susie, she 's so bad, she 's — a fool. There would n't be much harm in it if Joe was n't the worst fool of the two. She 'll be the losing of that man yet. Two fools can hatch a heap of mischief."

"He is n't much like *Macbeth*."

"I don't know that. You were asking about this book. I don't read books much. I can find out people right soon; books — they puzzle me."

"But you have read it?"

"Yes, I read it. I read it twice. I sort of set myself to believe it the second time. There 's a heap I did n't understand."

"And *Lady Macbeth*?"

"She was a queer one. All that howling and a-carrying on of the witch-women, it 's just nonsense. I got the idea those witches set it up to tell the man he was to be a king: that 's straight, is n't it?"

"Yes."

"'T is n't wholesome to get notions; they stick like bur-ticks. I knew a girl down at Marysville, in Georgia, and an old black woman told her, for her fortune, she was to marry a thin man with heaps of money, and the fool was so awful took with this that she told her beau. He was a direful stout man. Well, when she would n't have him, he went off and tried to starve himself thin; and the end was he fell away and died, and that girl, she never got another beau, fat or thin."

Ned and his aunt laughed.

"Well, what else, Dorothy?"

"That 's about all I have to say. That *Macbeth* woman understood p'intin' her man."

"She did, indeed."

"Sometimes Hiram gets tired of being p'inted. That 's how men are: they have n't got the natural goodness of women. I would n't give a cent for the woman that don't know a man has got to be kept p'inted on to the narrow way. They 're awful easy got off the track — just like Hiram: he 'll stop to pick berries any time. You just take notice how Eve she p'inted Adam, and it 's been going on ever since, like it was natural. Maybe 't is."

Anne was enchanted.

"Shall I leave you the book?"

"No, I don't want it. I could n't stand two of the kind. Susie Colkett 's enough. Have another cup?"

"No; and thank you for the roses, Dorothy."

"I had n't but just six."

"They were lovely." And now Anne was still more certain how six roses came to be five.

"I like them right well, Miss Anne. I don't believe anybody likes them more than me. Seems like waste, next month, to see those wild roses so thick all along the river, and no one so much as to smell them. Seems just pure waste, like that precious ointment Mrs. Lyndsay and me were talking about the other day. That always did puzzle me, that story."

"Does it?" said Anne. "Perhaps the flowers enjoy one another — who knows? And perhaps you and I and the rest of us are not all the beings of earth. Why should we think everything is meant only for us?"

"Sakes alive! Miss Anne, but you have got some queer notions. To think of folks you can't see smelling around among the flowers! Suppose you was to bump heads when you were smelling of them. It gives me the creeps to think of it. Hope I 'll never run against one of them. Must you go? Well, I 'm right sorry. When you and Mrs. Lyndsay and the rest go away, my old head will have a long rest."

"Shall I send you some books?"

"No. I should n't read them. I don't set much store by books, without I have some one to talk to, and poor Hiram is as mum as a stone. That 's the worst of our long winter. Only last night I was reading the Bible,— I do read that, Miss Anne,— and I came upon where Christ wrote on the sand. I just said to myself I would wait about that till I saw you. I did want to talk it over right away."

"And what is it you want to ask?"

"What do you suppose Christ wrote in the sand?"

"Who can tell that, Dorothy?"

"But it must have meant— Why did he do it?"

"I suppose," said Anne, thoughtfully, "that he wanted to let the woman think over what he had said. When you think of the eyes of Christ looking at you, Dorothy, you might understand."

"I see, Miss Anne. That woman she felt awful bad, I guess, and he only wanted not to seem to take notice. I would n't ha' thought of that in a year, not if I stayed awake all night every night."

"Why not write to me in the winter? I should like that."

"Would you really? That would take the edge off the lonesomeness. If I did n't say 'oh!' every now and then, of evenings when the green wood cracks and the sparks fly, I guess I 'd go dumb before the birds come back."

"Well, Dorothy, that is settled. I shall write first. Good-by!" And, with Edward, she moved slowly away through the broken cross-lights of the sunset glow.

CHAPTER XXVI

FTER two or three weeks in the forest, where "the slow-growing trees do patience teach," and the strong, effortless waters go by and seem only merry and idle, there comes to some men a sense of being at home. It does not come at once. We are all of us, in our busier lives of varied work or pleasure, actors in ever-changing rôles. It can hardly be otherwise. Almost the simplest lives involve some use of the art of the actor. In the woods, away from men and their struggles and ambitions, with the absence of need to be this or that, as duty, work, or social claims demand, we lose the resultant state of tension, of being on guard. It is readily possible to notice this effect in the rapid erasure from the faces of the constantly strained, intellectual workman of the lines of care which mark the features of those on whom, in one or another position, the world relies to carry its burdens.

At first, on passing from great mental occupation to the life of the forest, there is a period of unrest, of vague disappointment. But soon or late, with repose of mind, and the cessation of endless claims upon the sentinel senses, arises a distinct and less explicable

indifference to what a fortnight back was important. Our whole world of relation is gradually changed. The passion, strife, and more or less worthy motives of the great camps of men shrink to valueless dimensions, so that we look back and wonder how this or that should have caused us a thought, or called forth that irritability which is apt to be the offspring of the unceasing strain of modern life.

At last we lose count of the days, and acquire a strange impression of the remoteness of the tumult of the active life from which we have fled. So complete may be this feeling that at times the busy past seems to fade into dreamy unreality, as with sense of relief we give ourselves unresistingly to the wholesome influence of the woodland and the waters. Much of this ease of mind must be due to the physical well-being which this existence surely brings to those who know how to get out of it the best it holds.

This calm of spirit, and this feeling of perfect fullness of bodily health, were what Archibald Lyndsay unfailingly secured in his summer holiday. He had become careful to humor the pleasant mood, and to be annoyed when anything took place which forced him even for an hour to return to the problems of the outer world.

Such a summons had come from Anne. She had not explained why she had spoken, nor could she have given a reason beyond the fact that she and he habitually discussed in common all family interests, and that it was not always quite safe for Anne to talk of them to Margaret. That gentle little woman was indisposed to have others, as she said, "come between

given an excuse, and now, I suppose — She has not talked to Rose, I trust?"

"No, my dear. She has not and never will. That would be very unlike Anne."

"I don't know. One never knows what to expect."

"But you do now. Have you noticed of late how thin Anne looks? I sometimes think she will trouble none of us very long."

"I think you are rather prone to exaggerate about Anne. She is n't well, but these chronic invalids outlast the healthy." Margaret had the occasional hardness of the very tender. "As to Rose, it is as well to comprehend the matter, and then, as the man seems unexceptionable, to let Rose alone."

Mrs. Lyndsay's good sense usually kept her at the end on the ways of reasonable decisions. If she could always have acted without speaking, she would have had more credit for wisdom. But acts are rare, and speech is not; so that people were apt to say, "Margaret Lyndsay is a very good woman, but not always very wise." Those who knew her best did not so think, and especially Lyndsay, who well understood that great goodness cannot coexist with foolishness, because the more valuable goodness must have intelligence for one parent. There are people who reflect very little about what they are going to say, and a great deal about what they are about to do: of this kind was Lyndsay's wife; but then, under some circumstances, words are acts, or have their force, and so she made mischief occasionally for herself and for others.

"I quite agree with you, my dear," he replied. "It

were best left to Rose's good sense. In the end you and I are sure enough to agree."

"Perhaps you might give Anne a hint, or — shall I?" She was a trifle afraid of her sister-in-law.

"It won't be required. She has quite our own ideas about it"; and then Margaret knew that Anne had fully discussed this question with Lyndsay. She did not like it, but this time held her tongue.

The sun was low when they drew to the shore, a little above the point where Joe had left his dugout two days before. The oblong white box of a church stood on the upland, a dismal architectural symbol. Its closed doors and windows, the broken steps at the entrance, and the ragged, storm-worn paint looked dreary enough to Lyndsay as he passed with his wife through the open gateway.

"How hideous it is!" he said. "Would not you like it, my dear Margaret, if in the fall I had our boy brought home to rest among our own dead?"

"Very much, Archie."

"It shall be done," he said.

"Thank you." By this time they had picked their way around the church amidst growth of thistles and wild raspberry vines. Lyndsay led, and presently they were in the scantily-peopled half-acre back of the chapel. He stood a moment, confused.

"I don't see the stone," he said.

"What? What is that?"

He turned, and said again, "I don't see it!"

Margaret went by him swiftly.

"It was here! here!" and, utterly bewildered, she stood, looking up at her husband, or down at the

grave, and then around her. "Archie! It is gone! This is—is horrible."

Lyndsay paused a moment. He was both troubled and perplexed; but the intellectual puzzle was uppermost, and, as usual with him, was merely fed with motives for action and decisions by the shock of horror with which the thing affected him. As for his wife, she looked down again at the trampled ground and broken flower-stems, and then saying, "What is it? Where is it?" began to go to and fro, irregularly, among the graves, and along the tumbling stone wall of the inclosure.

At last she ran, like a scared thing, back to her husband, threw her arms about him, and burst into violent sobbing.

"Oh, my boy! my boy!" she cried. Her face twitched, and she broke out into unnatural laughter. Lyndsay caught her as she reeled to and fro.

"Take care, Margaret! Margaret! Be quiet. No more of this! I command you to control yourself!"

As he spoke he lifted her slight figure, and carried her to the gate.

"Sit down," he said. "Now, no more of this! I want your clearest head—your help."

"Yes, yes, Archie," she said. "I will try. I—oh, I could n't help it! Don't scold me."

His eyes filled. "No, dear love, not I. But keep still. I want to look. This is a mere vulgar, brutal theft. Wait a moment, can you?"

"Yes, but don't be long."

He walked back again to the little grave, and carefully examined the place. It was broken and battered

by large footmarks, and these led away toward the low stone wall, and were lost in the underbrush beyond the broken fence-rail on the far side of the unused road. He saw that the break in the rail was recent. At last he returned to his wife.

"The grave, dear, is not disturbed. Some fool has stolen the stone. Come with me; I want to go through the drift yonder, and I do not want to leave you alone."

She stood up, and followed him around the church, and back to where he had found the rail broken. "Ah, here again is a footmark," he said. At the river he walked along the margin, and at length came upon the place where a dugout had been drawn up and where were other footprints in the wet clay margin.

"It is very simple," he said. "We shall soon know. But why any man should do such a thing I cannot imagine."

"He ought to be killed," said our quiet Margaret.

"That will do for the present," he said, and then called to his men to drop down from the landing where he had left them. In a minute or two they were at the shore.

"Now, dear," he said, as they came near, "try to keep this thing a secret for the few days left us here. It is an intolerable bit of wickedness, possibly of malice, but this I do not believe. The more quiet we can keep it, the better my chance of discovering who has done it."

"I will try; but Anne!"

"Oh, Anne, of course, and Rose perhaps. It is the men who must not know, and the boys."

"That is easier. What shall you do about it, Archie? Who could have been so cruel?"

"Unusual crime," he said, thoughtfully, "has commonly unusual causes. I do not as yet know what I shall do. And now, dear, let us not discuss it any more. And will you tell Anne, or shall I?"

"I would prefer to do it myself, Archie."

As the sick animal knows by instinct what wild grasses it shall eat, this woman apprehended her need for a woman's strength and sure community of feeling. She was as certain to fall back on Anne's opinion or help in the end, or where she herself was honestly puzzled, as she was to resent her sister-in-law's independent assertion of her right to have a say where the question was one as to which Mrs. Lyndsay thought that the title mother or wife was in itself a victorious defense of all decisions needed in either capacity.

In this present trouble it was a woman's help she wanted. She had been for the first time in her life close to an hysterical attack. Without the forceful tonic of her husband's call upon her self-command, the discipline of years would have been of no avail: she would have been entirely routed. As it was, there had been sad disorder in the ranks of the governing qualities of a being unused to yield to the lawlessness of unrestrained emotion. This nearness of defeat was more or less due to the preparative softening influences with which she came to say a silent farewell to her dead, and to the suddenness of the shock of horror and of insult.

None turned to Anne Lyndsay in vain. As Lynd-

say and his wife approached the cabin, where, as usual, Anne was lying in her hammock, she saw at once that something had gone wrong. Her long walk was exacting the sad price of all physical exertion which took her beyond the limits of the most carefully measured exercise. She was in great pain, and, for a half hour, had been resolutely struggling to ignore it by forcing herself to give deliberate attention to a difficult passage in the second part of "Faust." She dropped her dictionary as they came up, put a marker in the page she had been reading, and rose on one elbow.

"Go and talk to Anne," said Lyndsay. "Is Rose still out, sister?"

"Yes; and the boys, except Ned. He is in the wood, somewhere. I am all alone, Margaret. What is it, dear?"

"Something very unpleasant has happened, Anne; nothing serious—I mean, no personal calamity. Margaret will explain." And so saying, he went into the cabin, while Mrs. Lyndsay sat down on a low stool, and, letting her head fall on Anne's bosom, began to cry. But this time she had herself well in hand, and the burst of tears was wholesome, as Anne instantly knew. She let her hand fall over Margaret's neck.

"Have it out, dear," she said. "A man always says, 'Don't cry'; a woman says, 'Cry; it will help you.' Cry as much as you want to. God knew our wants when he gave us tears. No; don't try to explain,—not yet, not yet." And the reassuring hand put back a stray lock of hair, and rested in tender caress on the wet cheek.

Both were still for a few minutes, save for an occasional sob.

"Now I am better, Anne. I can talk now. How well you know! — what is it, dear?" she added, abruptly, for a brief exclamation, "Oh, my God!" broke from Anne's lips. She was in the extremity of physical pain. The tone and words were unusual, as coming from these lips, and Margaret, instantly turning aside from her own trouble, caught the look of suffering on the other woman's face. She wiped her eyes hastily.

"Are you ill, Anne?"

"Yes. Oh, not ill! I had a stitch in my poor old side." Then she laughed low. "I am sure it is years older than the rest of me. Get me your smelling-salts."

Margaret got up at once and went into the cabin. As for Anne, smelling-salts, hot-water bags, sedatives, and, in fact, the whole armament of the invalid, were to her altogether unpleasant. But now she was in some want of a minute to herself. She got it, and more, for Margaret was some time before she came out with the smelling-salts and a flask.

"No, dear," said Anne; "no brandy." She used the smelling-salts, and returned them to her sister-in-law. "I hate all scented things. I am better now. Tell me all about it, and don't hurry. What is it?"

"We went up to my boy's grave, and, Anne, Anne, some one had trampled it all over — trod on my — my dead!"

"Well, dear. Take care! Don't give way, or you will go to pieces. There! What else?"

"And some cruel brute has taken away the tombstone. It was not there. Do you understand?" she cried, with fierce energy. "They stole it! It is gone!"

Anne understood well enough; but the fact, as told her, was so strange, so unlooked for, that she was amazed for a brief time beyond power of comment. The next moment all her heart went out to the mother at her side.

"It is horrible!" she cried. "Oh, for me, even, for me! And for you, what must it be?" She saw, as few would have done, the broken flower-fence, the rudely profaned and trampled grave, the gap in the earth where the stone had been. "For me, horrible—but, my dear God! what must it have been for you!"

"Yes; I am his mother!" She was moved because Anne did not pretend to share the maternal intensity of her feelings. "Only a mother could know. Archie says I must not think about it; but that is beyond my power—I must think about it. Who could have done it? I can't see any reason in the theft. Do you think it could have been to annoy us, or to get a reward? I—"

"No," said Anne. "Neither."

"Then what could it have been? There must have been a motive."

"Yes, there must have been."

"And what? We are liked, I think, on the river. We do try to help these people."

"Yes."

"Who could have done it?"

"Joe Colkett!"

"Archibald! Archibald!" cried Margaret, instantly rising. He came out at once.

"What is it?"

"Anne says Colkett took it!"

"What does this mean, Anne?" he said.

"Only this: Rose told us yesterday, you remember, that Colkett had been to see Dorothy about an inscription for a board to set over his wife's children. You heard her speak of it."

"Yes; but what then?"

"That man is the thief!"

"You are a most astonishing woman, Anne. What reason have you? You must have a reason."

"I shall have; but now, as yet, I have none."

"I am sorry, then. You have quite upset Margaret."

"No. I saw the man take it."

"Saw him? Nonsense — I beg pardon, dear, I don't quite mean that." He was nice always in his home ways with the women he loved. "I mean that you have spoken unadvisedly."

"Yes, I had no advice from within or without, for that matter; but I know that man is the thief."

"It is a serious charge."

"It is. When you come to think it over, you will agree with me."

Lyndsay was silent a moment. Then he called, "Tom! Tom! I am going up to the Island Camp; put the canoe in the water."

"What are you going to do, Archie?" asked Margaret.

"I want to talk to Carington. He knows all these people; has known them for years."

"Shall you tell him what my own belief is?" said Anne.

"Certainly! Why not?"

"But," exclaimed Margaret, "do you not think —"

"No. No, dear, I don't think at all as yet. I have no material for thinking — very little, at least." He spoke with unhabitual impatience. "Evidence is what we want."

He was annoyed by this mysterious crime in the midst of his idle hours; troubled by his wife's distress; and finally, if but to a slight extent, irritated at Anne's unreasoning dash at a decisive conclusion. Perhaps he was the more disturbed because, on hearing her, he had at once begun to put together facts, always within his own knowledge, which he felt should have caused him to have gone, under guidance of reason, toward the goal which she had reached at a bound.

"I shall be back in three or four hours. Do not keep the dinner waiting. Good-by."

"But, Archibald, do listen to me. It is not about — about this —" And she followed him as she spoke, and, at the edge of the cliff, said a few words hastily, but with earnestness.

"No," he said, so that Anne heard. "I see — I see, of course; but there is no help for it; and, after all, Carington is not a man —" And the rest was lost to Anne's ear.

"Perhaps not," said Margaret. "I suppose you know best." And she went back to Anne.

CHAPTER XXVII

HEN Lyndsay walked up the beach at the Island Camp, it was already dark. In the dinner-tent, on camp-stools, the two men were gaily discussing such events as in a fishing camp are always uppermost — how this or that salmon behaved, the weather, the water, or the eternal black-flies.

The cook had just set on the table a dish of broiled salmon, and said, as he did so:

"There 's a canoe at the beach — Mr. Lyndsay, I think."

"Come to ask your intentions, Fred," said Ellett, laughing.

"Hush, I hear him coming. I wonder what it is he wants." As Carington spoke, he threw open the fly of the tent. "Come in, Mr. Lyndsay; you are just in time. Bring the soup back, Jim."

"Thanks. How are you, Mr. Ellett? Yes, I will dine with you, and with pleasure. No soup, thank you," and he sat down.

For a while there was the ordinary talk of the river, and when, finally, they were left with the tobacco and cigars, Lyndsay having declined the rye whisky, he said:

"I came up to get a little help from you. We have had to-day a very singular and quite unpleasant incident. There is no one can overhear us?"

"No one. I need hardly say how heartily we are at your service. Pray go on. May I ask what has troubled you?"

"Of course. I came to tell you, and then to ask your help or advice. You know all these river men?"

"Almost all, even the lumber-gangs."

"I thought so. I shall be brief. Last year we buried my youngest child here. I had set up at the head of the grave a simple white stone. To-day I went up with Mrs. Lyndsay to see that it was all in order. To our horror the stone was gone. Of course my wife was painfully disturbed. The grave was trampled; the wild rose-bushes we had set around in a little thicket were beaten down. That is the whole story. I am, as you may fancy, greatly annoyed. I felt that, with your knowledge of the men hereabouts, you might possibly give me some clue. I owe you every apology," and he turned to Ellett, "for thrusting so personal a calamity into the hours of a holiday, but—"

"You could not have found two people more willing."

"Thank you."

"Let me ask you a few questions," said Carington.

"Of course."

The young man reflected a moment, and then in quick succession put his queries.

"Have you gone over the place?"

"Yes," and he told the little he had seen.

"Was it a dugout?"

"Yes, I think so."

"I will look to-morrow, early. Were there several people?"

"The foot-marks seemed alike — the usual many-nailed boot. I did not measure them."

"I will. The beach is clay up there. Has any one cause to injure you?"

"No one. My wife has been, as usual, all goodness to these poor people."

"I see no possible motive," said Ellett.

"Wait a bit, Oliver. The grave had not been opened?"

"Great Heaven! No."

"Why should a man want a tombstone?" said Ellett. "An insane person might have done it."

"No," returned Carington, thoughtfully. "No, there are none here. No, some one wanted that stone. Why! — by George, I hate to suspect the poor devil!"

"Who?"

"It is a mere guess, a suspicion. I have an idea that Joe Colkett stole that stone."

"It is a little odd. That, exactly, is my sister's conclusion."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. Being a woman, she had no reason to give, or none worth anything; and yet I myself am enough inclined to agree with her to want to make sure as to whether there is any evidence to be had. It is a thing to punish."

"I think so. The man is in pretty sore straits about money. But it cannot be any motive involving

money, and yet — however, it is useless to talk about it. The first thing is to go over the ground with care. Let me do that — early to-morrow. Ah, to-day is Wednesday; I must go to Mackenzie to-morrow. That I can't let wait. A man is to meet me there about my cabin. Can this thing rest a day?"

"Yes, I shall stay over Sunday. We had meant to go out on Saturday."

"Then I will call late to-morrow night for your boy — as we come back, I mean."

"One moment: I have thought best not to tell the boys. It can do no good."

"None. On our return toward camp, I will manage to send Jack off, and will myself slip down to Colkett's, and will look about me. If necessary, I can talk it out frankly. I think I could know in five minutes all the man knows, if he is in the thing at all."

"But you won't forget my warning, Mr. Carington. Joe is a poor sodden dog, but the woman is a devil."

Carington smiled. "Oh, I shall have my rifle; and, after all, what could a woman do? There is no manner of risk." He did not say that the notion of there being some peril in the matter made the enterprise more attractive. There were other motives also which were not disagreeable, and of these, too, he made no mention.

"Well, promise me to be on your guard."

"It all seems rather absurd, but I shall keep my eyes open. I may be very late to-morrow night. Tell Jack, and, by the way, if it is late, I shall have to keep your money until Friday evening, or Ellett can take it to you. Send me the draft to-night."

"I have it with me"; and he handed it across the table.

"I think," said Carington, "I would ignore the whole matter until I see you on Friday night. I would fish, as usual."

"I think so." He had asked advice and help, and this very decisive young man had certainly given it. "Thank you a thousand times," he said, as he rose; "you have really relieved me," and then he went away.

In his canoe he reflected a little on the mental peculiarity which made Anne and Carington prompt to conclude where he had been so tardy in reaching a decision. Anne had once said of him that his mind lacked wings, but was very sure on its legs. He reached home late, and rather weary. Anne said Rose had been told, and that Margaret had behaved admirably; also that the boys had no suspicion of the events which had distressed their elders.

The lives of men are lived under the limited monarchy of circumstance. Within this, men's instincts and personal qualities — in a word, character — decide how they deal with the stringency of events, or meet the despotism of changeless natural laws.

Carington was about to feel the results of a combination of influences, some within and some outside of those due to mental and moral peculiarities entirely his own.

What I saw in an idle hour may serve to illustrate my meaning. The reader has my benevolent permission to leave it unread. I was once lying on my couch of spruce in a rude log-cabin on the Alligash River. It was raining heavily, and we had left our

tents awhile for the more perfect shelter of a deserted log-cabin where the lumbermen had wintered years before my coming. Apparently for reasons as good as our own, many live things had come hither—some for a permanent home, and some, like Noah's menagerie, for temporary protection. A splendidly constructed spider's net occupied the open space where a window-pane had been. The three remaining panes were intact. It was a happy thought of that spider: when flies at noon sought the cool shade of the house, this open pane seemed to offer a way, and, when the sun fell, the path of exit was as inviting. The net was well stocked, as I saw, but mostly these corpses were dead shells, out of which the succulent meats had been taken. Nevertheless, the deadly *retiarius* lay coiled in a corner, as eager as if he had never had a breakfast. As to the flies, who were many, they seemed to be as ignorant of the net's thin lines as men are of the fatal meshes which circumstance spins in the way of human flies, or which character weaves when the fly is his own spider. The spaces between the anchoring cables were wide. Most of the flies went through quite unaware how near they had been to death. Some got into the toils and struggled out, and then went and sat down in dark corners, and reflected on free-will and predestination. At last a queer-looking, yellowish fly got into trouble. He was physically odd-looking, and as to mental organization clearly distinct from the herd of flies. He was evidently adventurous and on a holiday. He was in and out of the room, between the long net lines, half a dozen times. "That is luck!" said I. "The goddess Wyrda

has smiled on him!" At last he struck the net, and was caught. In place of struggling, he kept still a moment, while the spider ran out and made a reconnaissance. Then my fly gave a kick and a flutter, and was off and away. "Luck and strength," said I. By and by he sailed past me, and sat down to dine on the sweet margins of some ponds of molasses — the relics of our lunch. Being a little too eager, he got his legs in the sweets, and then his wings. Not liking this, he flew away, and, after a disorderly flight, made for the window, where he hit the center of the net. This time I got up to observe the affair closely. He made a brave fight, but the molasses on his sticky legs was the determining circumstance. The net-thrower crawled up with caution, when, of a sudden, a great bee, humming in its flight, went like a Minié ball through the net, and the spider fled, and the fly tumbled out — and this was the end. I felt as if I had been a superior being who, from the vantage of a higher sphere, had been watching one of earth's numberless dramas. He would have seen how instincts, character, and circumstance combine to determine the fates of men.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HERE are few things more interesting than to observe in a quiet family the effects of an explosion of the unusual. Assuredly, what had happened to the Lyndsays was uncommon. There is family character just as there is national character. Individuality is more or less dominated by it. Among those with whom we are dealing the endless discussions which in some groups of human beings are wasted on a matter of annoyance — a calamity or a grievance — were quite unknown. At need they talked over their troubles or difficulties, and put them aside when decisions were once attained.

Anne was fond of saying, "Talk is a wedge which widens troubles. When you think, you are talking to yourself alone, and are responsible for the consequences; it is hard so to weigh words as to know what weight they will have for others." And thus it was that even about her most unbearable pain she said nothing, and disliked all discussions which led to no working opinion. Mrs. Lyndsay alone was given to seeking sympathy in her small ailments; but Anne, as she herself once observed, "wore neither her heart nor her liver on her sleeve." And this was

the general tone. If talk was needed to settle a thing, there was enough, and no more. Lyndsay liked to say, "And now we will put it aside, my dear." He had thus ended a talk with his wife, who was disposed to say far more.

To all of them the unpleasant event I have recorded brought a sense of horror. But the primary mood of anger or disgust gave way to some other form of mental or moral activity, which varied with the person. Lyndsay simply and directly occupied himself with the slight evidence he had, and endeavored to reach a conclusion as to the criminal. Anne fell to thinking with interest of the motives of the criminal, and as to what possible temptation could make her desire to do such an act. The mother remained in a state of somewhat lessened emotional disturbance, wanting some one to talk to of it all, but finding none save Rose, who had no power to repress her.

Thus Thursday passed quietly enough at the Cliff Camp. Mr. Lyndsay wisely went a-fishing, and took Rose. It was pitiably true that, for Mrs. Lyndsay, the incident of the day before had renewed the grief which time had begun to heal. She wondered how Archie could go and fish. She even made a mild attempt to keep her daughter at home; but Lyndsay resolutely persisted, and had his way. Left to herself, Margaret devoted the morning to coddling Anne, which resulted, for the latter, in a condition of restrained irritability which was almost too much even for this heroic woman. At last she took refuge in her room.

Jack spent the day in cleaning his rifle, and Dick in stuffing a kingfisher, while Ned bothered him with questions which not Solomon could have answered. As to Carington, he asked Ellett to go up to the church and make careful measurements of the footsteps, as this, by relieving him of the task, would enable him to get away earlier for his long paddle to Mackenzie.

At dawn, Carington, with his two men, in their canoe, went by the Cliff Camp, where all was peacefully still.

At the little town he made his own arrangements for the building of his cabin in the fall, and cashed a draft for himself and one for Mr. Lyndsay. The seven hundred dollars of Canadian notes he rolled into a tight bundle and put in his breeches-pocket. Then, after a hasty meal and a little rest, he turned back for the journey up the river.

There was some paddling to do until they reached swift water, and here he "spelled" his bowmen, taking a turn at poling, and pushed on. Three miles an hour is very good speed at this business, and thus, as the way was long, it was far into the night before they reached the Cliff Camp. Every one else but Jack was in bed. He had taken his blanket and gun, and settled himself patiently at the foot of the cliff.

"Is that you, Nimrod?" said Carington.

"Yes."

"You have had a long wait. Is your father up?"

"No."

"Then I must keep this money until Ellett can give it to him to-morrow. Jump in. It is late."

In five minutes the boy was asleep in the bottom of the canoe. Carington began to think over what he should do next day about the tombstone business.

At his own camp-ground it took him some five minutes to restore Jack, for a time, to the world of the wakeful, and Carington himself was glad enough to find his own couch.

Before dawn, Michelle touched him on the shoulder.

"You are pretty hard to wake, Mr. Carington."

"Am I? What is it? Oh, we are going after bears. Hang the bears!" He rubbed his eyes, sat up, and said to Michelle, "Wake that boy. It will take ten minutes."

"Yes, sir."

After Jack's blanket was pulled away, and he himself rolled on to the tent-floor, he began to wake up.

"Coffee ready and lunch in knapsack, Michelle?"

"All right, sir."

Carington got up, and, laughing at the guide's difficulty in reviving Jack, went down to the beach, had a cold — a very cold — dip, and in a few minutes was dressed and ready, while Jack, but half awake, was making a boy's still briefer toilet.

Meanwhile Carington looked into Ellett's tent, and, seeing him sound asleep, hesitated a moment as to waking him, in order to give into his charge the money he had drawn. As he was about to speak, Michelle called out:

"Halloa! Canoe 's adrift! Take care, Jack. Paddle her in."

Carington ran out of the tent, and saw that Jack was again ashore. He had put his gun and other

traps in the boat, and then, jumping in hastily to arrange them, had caused the canoe to slip off into the current. The slight break thus caused in Carington's mental processes made him for the time forget his intention. Ten minutes later he remembered it, as they were flying down-stream, and his hand chanced to fall on the bulging packet of notes in his pocket.

"Confound it!" he exclaimed. "I forgot it. It is hardly worth while to go back, Jack. I meant to leave the money I drew with Mr. Ellett. I fancy it is safe enough." Then he proceeded to secure the pocket with a pin, saying, "We won't go back. It is late, as it is."

"I was thinking that," said Jack, to whom bears were of far more importance than the balance in the national treasury.

"I meant to wake myself earlier, Jack; but I was pretty tired. Usually I can wake when I please."

"I did think you were up, sir," said Michelle. "You were a-saying things about roses when I touched you."

"Was I?"

"Yes. Just, 'Rose—Rose'—like that."

"That 's queer," remarked Jack.

"No. I am rather fond of flowers, more so than most men. By the way, Jack, you are a first-class performer in your sleep. If the wedding-guest had heard your loud bassoon, I don't know what he would have done."

"Who was the 'wedding-guest'?"

"Ask Miss Rose."

"I shall say you told me to ask."

"That is hardly necessary. Read the poem—'The Ancient Mariner,' I mean."

"I don't care much for poetry stuff."

"Don't you? Well, you were pretty musical about 3 A. M." Then he played a little with the matter of his rosy dream. "I think, Jack, that very often dreams like this of mine seem to be the outcome of some quite trivial event rather than of the larger things of life. A day or two back I was trying to pick a rose, and pricked my finger. I did n't get the rose, but I—meant to. I suppose that thorn stuck into some pincushion of the mind. Odd, was n't it?"

"I dreamed about bears for a week after that beastly circus on the beach."

"No wonder," and they laughed. "I don't think dreams very interesting, Jack; but twice in my life I have chanced to see dreams produce some very strange results. See how the mists are melting away."

"What was it about—the dreams?"

"One, Jack, I cannot tell you. The other I can. I had a guide in the Wind River country who used to talk in his sleep. Several times when we were alone in the hills he woke me up by the noise he made. I used to whistle to quiet him long enough to give me a chance to fall asleep. It is a good recipe to stop snoring. I tried it on you."

"Dick can beat me all hollow! But please go on, Mr. Carington."

"Well, one night he kept at it so long, and talked so plainly, that I gave up in despair and listened. He was unusually excited this time. I heard him

say, 'Kill him! Kill him!' Then he groaned and rolled over and groaned so that I thought he had a nightmare. At last he sang out, 'Let me go! I did n't do it.' After this I whistled 'Yankee Doodle,' and it acted like a charm. Next morning at breakfast I said, 'Whom were you murdering in the night, and were they really going to hang you, Billy?' When I said this he looked at me sharply, and I saw he did not like it. He asked what he had said. I thought it best to say as little as possible, and so replied, 'You might have been killing bears, Billy.' I saw he did not believe me. All day long that fellow was restless and uneasy. He twice missed an elk, and he was a perfect shot."

"That was bad," remarked Jack.

"That was n't all. When I woke next morning Bill was gone. I never saw him again, and I had a pretty hard time getting back."

"Do you think he had killed somebody?"

"Probably. Folks' consciences seem to get a grip of them in sleep, and to go to sleep themselves in the daytime. It 's a queer enough story."

As they talked the paddles were busy, the mist melted, and they ran swiftly down-stream a mile or more below the Cliff Camp. Here, at a bend, where the river made a bold curve to the northwest, they ran ashore.

"That will do, Michelle. Be on the lookout about six or seven to put us over. Come, Jack. Give me the knapsack. Do not load yet." As he spoke they left the shore, and Carington, leading, struck into the woods.

They walked slowly through a tangled wilderness of trees, dead and alive, set in perplexing undergrowth, Carington explaining his plans to the boy as they tramped along.

"We shall go up the hill to left, over the crest and down on to Loon Lake. It is a mere pond, but the berries are thick on the far side, and, although now there are none, the bears have a habit of going there. We shall read our fortune clear when we get on the shore."

"By the tracks on the edge?"

"Yes. The deep print of the foot makes little pools; and if the water in these is still muddy, the prints are recent; if not, we shall get no chance."

"I see."

"Out in the Rockies we used to stir up the mud in the old prints with a stick so as to fool the other fellows. It is an ancient trick. By the way, Jack, at evening I shall set you on the ox-track to the west of Colkett's. I saw two porcupines there a day or two back. I will go straight down the mountain to Colkett's. I shall be but a few minutes at Joe's. I want to arrange about lumber for my cabin. If you see no game, don't wait, but take the cross track to Colkett's. You can't miss it. It starts back of the big boulder in the clearing on the left, as you face the river."

"And you will meet me?"

"Yes. Perhaps before you quit the open."

"I understand."

"The road does n't go all the way to Joe's, but I shall be on it before you."

"Yes."

"Be very careful how you shoot. Colkett's is not far, and the river in the other direction none too wide, and rifle-balls travel a long way."

"Yes, I will be careful."

"And don't carry your gun that way. So — that 's better."

It was full noon and cloudy as they walked noiselessly down the slope to the lonely little pond in the lap of the hills. At last they paused among a mass of boulders.

"Now, keep still. I ordered a man up last evening late to put a black kelt on the beach at the far side, where a brook comes in. I fancied it might fetch Mr. Bear." So saying, Carington adjusted his glass, and searched with care the curved line of the farther shore.

"Look there! It 's a good half-mile or more."

The boy took the glass.

"There are some water-weeds in a bunch, and above — oh, a black thing! A bear!"

"Come," said Carington, "you will want a skin for Miss Rose. Come."

The boy went after him, and the long walk around the lake began. The way was hard.

"We must go well back up over that hill, and then down the gorge which carries the stream."

At times the elder person glanced back at the noiseless, tough little fellow. "Tired?" he said, as they broke with care through the alders.

"Awful," said Jack.

At the foot of the hill, as they left the lake, they came on a bit of old burnt land, and here the way

was even harder. Myriads of dead pines, spruces, and firs, interlaced in tumbled ruin, made progress difficult. Now it was a giddy walk, twelve feet in air, along a slippery trunk, now a crawl under spiky and splintered stems. Again Carington looked back, and began to understand the value of the qualities of endurance, strength, and grip of purpose, with which the boy pursued his way.

At length, hot, brier-scratched, and weary, they came out on the hilltop. Jack was for immediate march, but Carington said:

"No. Get cool; you could not hit a barn-door now. Lie down a bit. You will want to be fully rested. As for me, I am half dead," and he dropped on the scant soil. "Fine, is n't it?"

A great sea of lesser hills was all around them, with here and there a rare sparkle of silver from distant windings of the river.

As for Jack, who lay on the summit, his eyes were eagerly searching the ravine down which they were to go.

"A friend of mine — oh, drop that bear, Jack; he 'll keep — a friend of mine says that to enjoy a view like this one must walk up. He has a notion that somehow the exercise absolutely increases your mental power to get the best out of it."

Jack was not clear as to this, and he said so.

"I don't understand it myself. I do not know why it is true, but it is true — for me, at least."

"Maybe because it 's hard work," said Jack.

He could not get his idea into proper shape, not having Ned's facility of expression.

"Yes," said Carington. "We like what is difficult to get; but that is not all of it. I suppose, if bears were as easy to get as omnibus horses, neither you nor I would go after bears."

"I guess that 's so."

"What do you want to be, Jack, when you grow up?"

"I shall go to West Point."

"Well, and after? The army is not a career, nowadays."

"But there is first-rate sport in the West."

"Yes; but that is for one's idle hours. Life is a pretty big thing, Master Jack."

"What do you do, Mr. Carington?"

"I build bridges, lay out railroads, generally scrimmage with nature to make life easier for man. How would you like that?"

"I don't know." He had a clever lad's indisposition to commit himself. "Is it easy? — I mean, to learn. I hate books — school-books, I mean."

"No; it is n't easy. But it is work for a man. Go to a school of engineering for three or four years when you are older, and then come and help me to build bridges. All this energy of yours — all this hatred of defeat — this — well, you have the whole outfit, as we say in the Rockies, but it is no good unless you know how to do things. The fellows that know and have no steam, I don't care about. Now, we want that bear, don't we?"

"Rather!"

"And first, we know how to get him, and then we want him so tremendously that torn breeches, scratched legs, and the like, make no kind of differ-

ence. Just patent that combination, and, as my friends down in Carolina say, 'there you are.'"

The small skeptic returned, "But we are n't there yet."

"We will be. The wind is up the gorge. See those ferns, how they sway up-hill. He can get no scent of us."

"That 's so. I would n't have thought of that."

"It is intelligence against mere instinct. Are you easily lost in the woods, Jack? I am. I have no resource except incessant observation of landmarks."

Jack looked up in surprise. "I—lost? No, I never get lost."

"But is that really so?"

"Yes. I wander off anywhere. It is easy to find your way here; but in Maine it is harder. I was up with father two years ago, at the Parmaccini lakes, and he almost always had to ask me the way."

"How do you know it?"

"I don't. I go home."

"Like a dog?"

"I suppose so. I can't tell."

"But do you not unconsciously take note of the sun, and the moss on the north side of the trees, and so guide yourself?"

"No—I may; I am not sure. I only know I can get back, and I go pretty straight. Father says it is instinct."

"That may be. I have seen guides who could go through a wood without fail, and unerringly take you to camp in the darkest night. They cannot tell how they do it."

"I never thought much about it," said Jack.

"It is worth thinking about. You see most instincts are intelligently aided in man. The thing is to keep your instincts and help them with mind; but I fancy you will lose yours as you cease to use them. What you seem to have is like the instinct which brings the salmon back to his own river, the homing pigeon to its own cote, and the cat you may have tried to lose to its own kitchen, miles across the unknown streets of a great city."

"Can you explain it?"

"No," replied Carington. He was interested in the talk. "No, it is incomprehensible. There are organs in the ear which tell us the point from which sounds come, and the eye is a help; but there is over and above all, this instinct of direction, which guides the bird, or, still more wonderfully, the fish, and to some degree, I suppose, the men who have this capacity. I was once lost in a cave in Virginia. After an hour of turning and twisting in long passages, and among forests of stalactites, two hundred feet underground, the guide of a sudden got altogether bewildered and terribly alarmed. A boy who was with us said, 'I can get out,' and, by Jove, Jack, he took us back, and in and out, and at last into the open air. He never paused."

"That was a scrape. I wish I had been with you."

"Do you? I prefer not to try it again. Are you rested?"

"Yes."

"Then come." And they went over the slope, and began to go down the bed of the scantily fed brook.

In a half-hour they came to a small basin whence the water fell into the pool below. Creeping cautiously, they reached the edge and looked down on the muddy shore. The bear had gone. Then Carington took his glass.

"The tracks go to the left," he said. "Come, but be careful."

Slowly and in silence they scrambled down to the edge of the underbrush. Suddenly Carington caught the boy's arm and drew him back.

"Hush!" he murmured. "Softly. There!" and parting the bushes, he pointed through them. A large bear was slowly moving along the curve of shore, not forty feet away. "Your bear, sir; behind the left shoulder. Steady!"

"No — you, sir!"

"Quick! You will lose him. Steady now! Well done!" he cried aloud, as the boy's rifle rang out, and the bear fell, rose, and fell again. "No! Don't run in! Load! Now wait a moment!" And, so saying, he moved along the beach. But poor Bruin was dead.

"Clean shot, Master Jack!"

"By George!" cried the boy. "What fun! I thought — I was awful afraid you meant to shoot him yourself."

"That is not my way with my friends. I hate selfish sportsmen. When you have killed as many bears as I have, we will toss up for the first shot. He is dead enough." And Carington nudged the beast in the ribs with his gun-barrel.

Jack inspected his prey with care. "We must get his skin."

"Of course. Got a knife?"

"Yes."

"Then help me."

It was a long business, and the sun was well down when they were done, and the skin packed in a tight roll on Carington's back.

"We will hang up the meat and send up for it early to-morrow. It is poor, at best. Come, Jack. I think you are an inch taller. You have killed a bear!"

"Just have n't I?" said the boy.

"And you are going to be an engineer," added Carington, laughing.

"I don't know," said Jack. "Would Michelle tan the skin for me?"

"Yes. It shall be smoke-tanned and sent down to you. Once smoke-tanned, it is fairly moth-proof, and you will find it does not get stiff after a wetting. The civilized man has never yet learned the art of the tanner."

"I want it for Aunt Anne."

"I thought you said it was for Miss Rose?"

"No. That was what you said."

"Did I?" And they went on in that uncertain light which is more puzzling than darkness, in and out of the water, or, with exclamations and laughter, pitching over rocks and dead trees.

Half-way down the hill Carington stopped. The brook-channel they were following descended to the river in a widening gorge. He intended to follow it, and, after seeing Colkett, meant to rejoin Jack, as he had previously arranged. He now set the boy on a disused lumber-road leading to the clearing, saying,

at last, "This is my way. You may see the porcupine in the open to the left, but be careful how you shoot. Confound it! How much longer do you think I am going to be your pack-mule? I shall kick. Here, carry your own plunder." And, laughing, he cast the bearskin on the ground.

Jack's face lit up. This, of all things, was to be desired.

"I was going to ask you if I might carry it a bit."

"Were you? Well, be off, and, if you lose yourself, remember that all the slopes lead to the river."

"Yes. As if any fellow did n't know that!" said Jack to himself, as he trudged away, very proud, with the bearskin on his back.

CHAPTER XXIX

CARINGTON stood a moment, looking after the boy. Then he readjusted the straps of the knapsack, which he had taken again when Jack had loaded himself with the bearskin, and went rapidly down through the more open forest.

At first he had meant to look quietly about the cabin, hoping to find the place where the children were buried. On reflection, he changed his mind, and determined to go at once to the Colketts's, for which he had a ready excuse. There was still enough of light, but he had not as yet the least idea where the little graveyard lay. Better, perhaps, he thought, to ask Dorothy, and to return at mid-morning, when Joe would be away. That there was the least peril in his search he did not think, despite Lyndsay's warning. It had interested him, and he meant to be guided by it so far as to have some other guide than Joe in September. That was all.

At the edge of the clearing he climbed over the snake-fence, and walked at once to the well, being hot and thirsty. Mrs. Colkett, seeing him, came out of the cabin, and met him as he began to lower the bucket. He turned as she came.

"Good evening, Mrs. Colkett. Is Joe about? I have a job for him."

"He 's 'round somewhere. Joe!" she called, in a high-pitched voice; "Joe!"

The man came from the cow-shed, and joined them at the well.

"Was you wantin' me, sir?"

"Yes, Joe. I mean to build a cabin on the island this fall. Remson will do it. I saw him yesterday. He wants you to get out a lot of squared lumber. Can you do it?"

"Yes."

"I will give you the measurements before I leave. It will be a pretty good job for you. Mind you pick out good stuff."

"I will; no fear of that. Want some water, sir?"

"Yes."

Joe let down the bucket, and brought it up brimming. He set it on the rim of the well. Meanwhile Carington sat on the ledge, and, tilting the bucket, wetted his handkerchief and wiped his brow.

"That 's jolly good. By George, but I am warm! I have had a hard tramp." As he completed this brief refreshing of the outer man, he looked up, and for a moment considered the scaffold of big bones on which time and care had left Susan Colkett but a minimum amount of flesh.

He took no more deliberate notice than do most people of the features, which gave him, however, in their general effect, a sense of strangeness and of vague discomfort. The eyes were too big, and, like the cheek-bones, too red, the features large. Beside

her the stout husband, muscular and not unkindly of look, presented an odd contrast. There did not seem much harm in him, and how miserably poor they must be!

"Come over soon," said Carington; "I will tell you then more precisely what I want."

"He 'll come," said the woman.

"Very good."

"Would you mind, sir, to give Joe a little in advance? I 'll see he comes."

"Why not? Certainly!"

"The fact is, Joe he 'd never think to ask it; he 's that modest."

Carington, who had been looking at her husband's face, was of opinion that he was pretty full of whisky, and just now dulled with drink. Still, he was a good workman, and the misery in which they lived was but too obvious. He might have found a more certain agent, but then he would have lacked excuses for the interviews which his present purpose required.

"I will tell you just what we want when you come over, and, as to pay, I shall be glad to give you now a moderate advance."

"Thank you, sir," said Joe.

"He 'll come to-morrow, sure. Fact is," she went on, "we ain't a dollar, and there 's no work, and this house, there 's a man in Mackenzie 's got a mortgage on it, and the pork 's about out."

"Will you have to go?"

"That 's what we 'll have to do."

"Rather hard, that."

"I would n't mind so much if it was n't to leave them dead children, sir, and no man to care for their graves. 'T ain't like as if we was rich."

"Are they buried here, Mrs. Colkett?"

"Yes, they 're put away, back in the woods. You might call that buried. We are just clean broke, Mr. Carington, and that 's all there is to say."

"I am sorry for you." And he was, despite all he knew, being a man pitiful of what led to crime or to want. "I shall be very glad to give you help now."

"The lawyer man he 's coming to-morrow, pretty early. If we ain't got twenty dollars, the cow must go."

"Can he take it? I don't understand that."

"He says so. I don't rightly know. We poor folk can't ever tell. We most always get the worst of it."

She played her part and told her lie well, looking down as she spoke, and at last wiping her eyes, while Joe uneasily shifted from one foot to another as he stood.

Carington put his hand in his pocket, and took out the roll of notes. As he unfolded them, the woman's eyes considered them with a quick look of ferocious greed. He counted out twenty-five dollars, and gave the money into her hand, replacing the roll in his pocket as she thanked him. After this he took the bucket, tilted out of it half the water, and, raising it, drank. As he buried his head in its rim, Susan caught Joe by the arm, and pointed to the thirsty man, whose back was toward them. She looked

around in haste, took a step toward a broken axhelve, which lay near by, and then stood still, as Carington set down the bucket. He had been nearer death than he ever knew.

As he turned, the woman's face again struck him. It was deeply flushed; the large, sensual lower lip was drawn down, so as to uncover a row of large yellow teeth, and the face was stern.

"Thank you, sir," she said again, quick to notice his look of scrutiny.

"You are welcome. Come, Joe. I want to talk over the lumber."

As Joe went by her, Susan caught his arm with so fierce a grip that he exclaimed aloud.

"What is it?" said Carington, pausing.

"I hurt my foot last week, and I just stumped my toes — that 's all."

They walked on and reached the house. Here she passed them and went in. While they stood a moment in talk, she moved to the far corner, and took from its rack Joe's old-fashioned muzzle-loading rifle. She knew that, as usual, it was loaded. Then she hesitated, set it down against the table, and fetched a bowl of milk to the door.

"You might like a drink of milk?" she said. "Come in. It 's good. Dory fetched it; our cow 's run dry. Hers was better anyway. It 's right rich."

Carington might have thought of Jael as Mrs. Colkett faced him. "She brought him butter in a lordly dish." His thoughts, however, were far away.

"No, thank you," he replied, absently.

"Won't you rest a bit, sir?"

"No, I must go."

Profoundly disappointed, she went in, sat down, took hold of the rifle, and then set it aside, as she listened.

"I am not over sure of the way, Joe." He knew it well enough. "Come with me a bit."

"Yes, sir." They went around the cabin and struck off into a forest road. At the brook, which crossed it some fifty yards from the house, Carington turned off the road. He had brought Joe thus far with the indistinct intention of sounding him about the lost tombstone. Suddenly, however, Joe said:

"I would n't go down the trail by the stream, sir."

"Why not?"

"It 's shorter, but it 's awful muddy."

"Oh, that does n't matter."

"You 'd lose your way, sure."

"Nonsense."

The man's manner was so uneasy that Carington at once concluded that the trail might lead near to the object of his search.

"Good night," he said, abandoning his intention to question Joe. "I shall take the brook trail. Don't come with me. I see you are very lame."

"Don't you try that way, sir. You — you — I got stuck in that swamp last fall. It 's real bad."

Carington was now still more certain of the cause of the lumberman's persistent warnings. "I 'll risk it," he said and set off. "Good night."

"Good night. Keep the left side, if you will take the trail."

"All right, Joe."

He crossed the rivulet, and kept to the right bank. Joe stood a moment looking after him. The brook-path would bring Carington full in sight of the tombstone, and the shadows were not yet deep enough to hide it. A great fear came upon him of a sudden. He turned, and ran limping back to the house.

"What is it?" she cried, as he stumbled in. "Is he dead? Have you done it?"

"No, no! I could n't stop him! He 's gone down the brook. Oh, Lord, he 'll see it, and I 'm done for! He 's a-goin right for it."

She broke out, "Here!" and thrust the rifle into his hand. "Now is your chance! It 's a heap of money. Go! go! You are ruined, anyway. Ruined! He 'll see it. He 'll see it, sure. Make it safe. Quick!"

The man stood still. "I can't! I just can't!" He was shaking as with ague.

"Coward! Fool! Give it to me." And she tore the rifle from his hand.

"Susie! Susie! It 's murder."

He caught her arm, and her gown, which tore in his grasp. She thrust him aside with a blow of her open hand on the chest. He fell over a chair, and got up, limping, unsteady, in extreme pain from his hurt foot. She was gone.

"I will kill you if you follow me," he heard, as she passed the open window.

He believed her. He was afraid. He went to the door, limped back, and, falling into a chair, stuffed fingers into his ears, while sweat of terror ran down his cheeks. A moment passed, then another, and, de-

spite his childlike precaution, he heard his rifle ring through the forest stillness, and upon this he burst into tears, and cried aloud, "Oh, Lord, oh, Lord God!"

As he spoke, he rose up, and stood in agony of expectation. The woman came in.

"Where 's your powder and ball?"

"I ain't none. Last charge," he gasped. "Did you miss him?"

"Miss! No. Take an ax, and go and make sure. He ain't to be feared now. I hit him sure. Go and get the money. Have n't you that much pluck, you sot?"

"I dassen't."

"He 's got his gun, Joe, and I had a notion he might be just crippled, and I 'd come and get a load and make certain."

As she spoke, he stood by her, swaying on his feet, dazed.

"Great God, are you a man!" she cried.

"Not that sort," he said, slowly. "Did you say you done it, Susie?"

"Did I? You fool! Go and get the money. He won't hinder you none."

"I could n't, Susie."

She looked about her, in no wise intimidated or hurried. An ax stood in the corner.

"What! What! You must n't!" he cried.

"Go and get a spade," she said. "I 'll fetch the money. And, seizing the ax, she thrust him aside as he stood in the doorway. "You white-livered coward, get out of my way, or I 'll brain you."

He shrunk aside. He could only say, "Susie! Susie! Don't — don't!"

"Off with you!" And passing him, with no more words, she ran around the cabin and disappeared in the darkening forest.

This time she moved with extreme caution, so as to approach her victim in another direction. Nevertheless, being, like most of the forest-dwelling women, a fair shot, she felt coolly certain of her prey.

After leaving Joe, Caringtón had followed the brook, or rather the trail beside it, for some hundred yards, when he noticed a gleam of white among the shadows. Anything unusual in the forest is sure to win instant notice from men accustomed to wandering and to keeping all their senses alert. Moreover, he was now keenly observant. He stopped, and, crossing the brook, broke through the undergrowth, and stood at once in a clearing some twenty yards wide. As he came nearer to the three little mounds, now dimly visible, he saw the white slab, and instantly understood that his guess had been correct. A little while he remained still, in thought recalling what Dorothy had said, and gradually seeing in his mind the pitifulness of it all: the crude animal eagerness of the mother; the rough, unthinking man's wish to please her.

At last, laying aside his rifle, he knelt down, and, unable to see, felt with his hands the surface of the stone. "Ah!" he exclaimed, recognizing on the back the dints poor Joe's tool had made. Next he struck a match, and, guarding it with his hands, read the inscription. The match went out before he had quite done. He lit another.

"Ah me!" he murmured; "this is a strange world."

And he read, "Of such are the kingdom of heaven." "What a sad business!"

He lifted his hand to cast aside the still-burning match. At this instant, while still on his knees, there was a flash of light. He heard no sound, but fell across the graves, motionless.

Meanwhile, Jack, with swift feet, eager for home, trotted down the broken road, and, to his disgust, finding no porcupines, struck easily into the cross-road, and, passing the boulder, moved away along the forest-track. At last the way became less and less plain; but, trusting by habit to his sense of direction, he pushed on into the wood.

A little surprised not to meet his friend, he concluded that he might possibly have missed his way. For the first time the boy hesitated. Then, as he stood, he heard a rifle, and, sure at once that Carington must have shot something, he ran with greater speed. In a few moments the tangle of undergrowth checked his pace. Some five minutes or more went by, and he saw a flare of light. Thinking it strange, he hurried his steps, and then, of a sudden, stood still.

The woman had carefully approached her prey, ax in hand, and at last saw, as she strained her vision, that Carington's rifle lay out of his reach. Reassured, she went on more boldly. Looking around, and seeing no one near, she calmly lifted the man's head, and let it fall. This seemed enough. She took the roll of money, and began to disengage the watch-guard; but, unable to release the catch in the buttonhole of his jacket, struck one of the matches which, as usual, she had in her pocket, caught up a scrap of birch-bark,

and, lighting it, saw by the flare how to undo the chain. As she dropped the watch into her bosom, a long gasp broke from the chest of the man beneath her.

"He ain't done for," she exclaimed, and rose to her feet, the roll of burning birch in one hand, the ax in the other. She stepped back a pace, cast down the blazing bark, which flashed forth anew as she let her right hand slip up the handle and lifted the ax.

A voice rang out to the left, "Stand, or I 'll shoot!"

She set a foot on the fading bit of fire, and, still gripping the ax, fled, with one hoarse cry, through the woods, striking against the trees, falling, tearing her hands and clothes in the raspberry vines.

Joe heard her coming, and stumbled out.

"He ain't dead," she cried, "and there 's another man there. I got the money, though. Come! quick! Take blankets — go on to the road. I 'll be there in a minute. Don't stand staring. You 're drunk!"

He was. All day long he had been drinking; and when she went out, he found his bottle and emptied it, half crazed with fear. He obeyed her with difficulty and came out staggering — letting the blankets trail, and stumbling as he went. Then he halted.

"Where am I going?"

"Oh, the river! the river! — the dugout! Fool! sot! The dugout 's at the lower landing, is n't it? I left it this morning."

"Yes, it 's there."

"Then wait at the road."

She went back into the cabin, caught up some

"I 'll try. Great Scott! It 's my left shoulder." And he fell in the effort to get to his feet. "I can't do it. Get my flask. Ah, that 's better."

This time he crawled with one arm and Jack's help to the margin of the clearing, and at last lay among the underbrush.

"Tie a handkerchief, tight, here, around my arm-pit. I don't think it bleeds. It might. Now lie down, and keep an eye over yonder. In a while I shall be better. What a deuce of a business! Now keep quiet. Are you loaded?"

"Yes—both rifles."

Jack waited, a hand on his rifle. Presently Carington said, feeling his pocket with the right hand, "George! that 's it. I was a fool. It 's gone! and my watch!"

"How 's that?"

"No matter now. Halloa, Jack, what is that light?"

"Light?"

"Yes," for the upward glow of the blazing cabin now rose in the sky overhead, and soon began to send arrowy flashes of illumination through the trees.

"Can't be the woods," said Carington. "They are all wet, and there are few pines. Let us try to get out of it."

This time he did better, but it was slow work, and Jack became more and more anxious as the light grew behind them, and now and then sparks fell through the foliage about their path. They were soon close to the shore.

"Stop!" cried the boy. "Who 's there?"

"Good Heavens!" said Lyndsay. "Jack! Jack!" and Rose, at his side, repeated his name. "What is wrong?"

"I got a little hurt," said Carington, leaning against a tree. "That is all. It is of no consequence."

"He 's shot," Jack blurted out. "A woman shot him. Oh, but I 'm glad to see you!"

At this Rose exclaimed, "Shot!" and caught at a great, friendly pine near by and held fast to it, until a moment of its stay sufficed to steady her. "Is it bad?" she said, in a voice which elsewhere might have told enough, had the comment of her face been visible.

"No," said Carington, cheerfully. "It is really of no account, Miss Lyndsay. Let us get away. I can tell you all to-morrow."

Lyndsay put a strong arm around him, and, thus aided, they were soon at the shore, where Michelle in Carington's canoe lay ready beside Lyndsay's.

"Mr. Carington 's hurt," said Lyndsay, and in a few words explained the matter.

Carington, too weak and dazed to resist, or indeed to care, found himself in a minute in Tom's boat with Lyndsay, while Rose and Jack followed in Michelle's canoe.

"Down-stream," said Lyndsay, "and hurry, my men."

"Where are you taking me?" asked Carington, feebly.

"To the Cliff Camp, of course, my dear fellow. We are going to get even on the bear business."

"You are very good." He was in dreadful pain,

but even this did not prevent the pleasant reflection that he was to be under the roof with Rose Lyndsay.

"By George!" he added, "it hurts."

"I know well enough," said Lyndsay. "You are not bleeding, however. I still have one of these leaden hornets in me. It takes the pluck out of a fellow, at first."

"I should think it did!" said Carington.

"Don't talk now. It can't be serious. To-morrow, or later, we shall want to hear more."

Meanwhile Rose in her own canoe was hearing from Jack all that he knew of the day's misadventure.

"That will do," she said, at last, and fell back on her seat, deep in thought. There are some fruits which only winter ripens quickly.

CHAPTER XXX

YNDSAY had just come in when he saw the glow of the fire over the hilltop. He was curious and a little anxious. Wood-fires are of all things what men dread the most, when once they have been face to face with their terrors. He called his men again, and ordered them to take him up the river. Rose, who had been with him on the pool, asked at once to go with him.

He said, "I see no objection. Get a wrap and make haste."

Thus it chanced that in a few moments they were poling up the stream with more than usual speed.

"Halloa!" cried Lyndsay, as a dugout shot by them in the darkness. "What 's wrong up above?"

There was no reply.

"Is n't that queer?" said Rose. "How uncivil!"

"Very."

At the landing they went ashore, and pushed on to see what was the source of the blaze.

Presently Lyndsay halted, noticing the sparks about him. "There is no wind, Michelle."

"No, sir; and the woods are soaking wet. I 've a notion it 's Colkett's."

"Best to see. I will wait at the boat. I don't want to run any risk with Miss Lyndsay." But at this moment he heard Jack's challenge, and so all the threads of my story are spun together.

As they ran down-stream, Lyndsay was a little uneasy concerning what might be his wife's judgment as to his course in regard to Carington; but he had felt very deeply the obligation under which the young man had placed them, and he was clear enough that there had been really nothing else to do. Nevertheless, he was shrewd as to the domestic management of the matter. At the landing he said to Rose:

"Wait a moment, you and Jack," and then ran up the steps and into the house.

By this time Rose was in full command of herself, and able, as her father left them, to speak tranquilly enough to the wounded man.

"Yes, he was in some pain; but, to judge from his own feelings, the trouble could not be grave."

Then she asked, quite naturally, if Mr. Ellett had been told, and learning that he had not, sent Jack to find Polycarp, that he might take a note to the Island. When Jack came back with the Indian, Rose said:

"I must see papa about the note for Mr. Ellett. Ah, here he comes." She did not wait to complete this business, but turned to the canoe where Carington still lay, and said:

"Good night, and good-by, too, for a few days. Mama will keep you well caged. You may rest assured of that!"

In the very dim light she saw him put out the hand nearest to her. She took it, felt the lingering grasp, already fever-hot, that would have delayed the moment's soft prisoner, but dared not. She said again:

"Good night. Here is papa," and moved away, at first slowly, and then quickly.

When Mr. Lyndsay entered the cabin his wife looked up.

"What is it, Archie?"

"Don't be alarmed, Margaret. Mr. Carington has been shot—badly wounded."

"Not by Jack!" cried the mother.

"Oh, no! No. It 's a queer story. I have not heard it fully. He bled a good deal, and—"

"Do you think him in danger, Archie?"

"It is hard to say, especially so soon."

"Surely you did not leave him at their camp?" said Margaret.

"No. He is in my canoe on the beach."

"Good gracious! Is he?"

Anne smiled, as she would have said, inside of her, and reflected upon the wisdom her brother had displayed, for at once Margaret, easily captured by appeals to her pity, was afoot, and, for the time, intent alone upon what was best to be done.

"I would send Tom to Mackenzie for a doctor, and he must stay. I think, Archie, you will have to give Mr. Carington your room and take to a tent." Then she went off to set the room in order, while Lyndsay returned to the beach, still a little anxious, but also a little amused.

Rose had gone.

By and by the guides carried the wounded man up into the neat chamber, where Lyndsay helped him to bed, and was easily able to ascertain that the ball had crossed the chest beneath the skin, passed over the left shoulder, and out again — a severe flesh-wound.

"It does not bleed," said Lyndsay, "and I think there is no very serious hurt. Can you move your arm?"

"Yes,— with pain."

"Then the joint is safe. I have known fellows brevetted for things no worse."

"But my puzzle is, why what is only a flesh-wound should have made me drop as if I were dead. I cannot understand it."

"The doctors call it 'shock,'" said his host. "At times it affects the head, and a man hit in the foot or arm goes crazy for a time, or else it stops the heart, and he faints."

"That was it, I suppose."

As they talked Lyndsay put on a wet compress, and, with the skill learned long since, where bullets were many and bigger, he made his patient reasonably comfortable, and left him at last under Mrs. Lyndsay's despotic care.

In the mean time, Anne, anxious to know more, had looked for Jack. At ease concerning Carington, he was off somewhere, busy about the preservation of his precious bearskin, and Rose, too, had disappeared. Anne felt that she must wait, and, as usual, went to her room, to rest a little before their

retarded dinner. She opened the door, and instantly went in and shut it. Rose was lying on the bed, trying hard to suppress her sobs, knowing well that she would be but too easily heard.

"Dear child, what is it?" said Anne.

"I don't know. Oh, do, please, let me alone!"

"But I must know. It is so unlike you. Mr. Carington is in no danger."

"I know. I don't care whether he is in danger or not. I do care! It is n't he! It 's—it 's me—it 's I. I can't tell. I am ashamed. Are all women this way? Oh, I hate to be such a fool!"

Anne sat down. "I don't quite understand, dear; but, no matter. What is clear is that you are going to have hysterics."

"I am not going to have hysterics."

"Then keep quiet, and don't talk."

"You made me talk!"

"I did. I am an ass."

"No—no! Kiss me, aunty. I am so miserable! Could n't I get to bed quietly?"

"Yes. Your mother is busy. Come." And thus, when at last dinner was on the table, and Mrs. Lyndsay asked for her daughter, she was told that Rose had a headache, and then, when she got up to go to her, that she was asleep, which may or may not have been true.

At dinner, between what Carington had told Lyndsay and Jack's very clear statement, the story came out plainly enough. The boy was praised to his heart's content, and when Anne had said that this was courage in the right place, and Carington refused to

sleep until he had thanked him, Jack felt that, including the bearskin as a part of the day's blessings, life had no more to give. As for Dick, he settled the genus and the species of the bear, and Ned sat in a corner and meditated, seeing the whole day's events in pictures, with curious dramatic clearness.

Next morning the doctor arrived, and further reassured them. Mr. Carington was in for a day or two in bed, and then might be out in the hammock.

Of course Ellett had been informed the night before, and had come down at once. When again, next day, he returned, there was a long consultation, and it was decided that the patient was so well that Ellett might move down and take care of him, that the doctor would come back and stay a few days, and that Mr. Lyndsay and his family might go away on Sunday night. To this plan Mrs. Lyndsay somewhat eagerly assented, for reasons of which she said nothing, an unusual course for the little lady.

Thus, on Friday and Saturday, what with fishing and packing, every one was busy.

"Preliminaries are the bane of existence," said Anne, "but postliminaries are worse"; and thereupon she asked Ned if that word was in "Worcester," and declared for a dictionary of her own making.

Mrs. Lyndsay had no opinion of Anne's capacities in any practical direction, and declined for a day her help in the care of Mr. Carington. But now she was over-busy, and thus it chanced on the next morning, being Saturday, that she asked Anne to look after their wounded guest. They had purposely brought no maids with them, and, even with all of Rose's help,

Anne had been obliged to assist in packing, for, as concerned her books, she was as old-maidish and precise as are some other of her corps about what Anne regarded as quite unimportant properties. To escape, at last, out of the bustle of packing, and to find some one to talk to or be talked to, was entirely to her taste.

"Certainly, Margaret," she said.

"And do not let him talk."

"No."

"And do not talk to him, dear."

"Of course not."

"There is nothing so fatiguing."

"No. That is quite the case."

"And be careful about drafts."

"Yes. Is that all?"

"I think so," returned Mrs. Lyndsay, doubtfully, and then went before Anne into Carington's room.

"I have brought you a new nurse. My sister-in-law will look after you this morning. You must not let her talk to you." And having thus doubly provided against the deadly malaria of conversation, she went out as Anne sat down.

Carington liked the maiden lady, with her neat dress and erect carriage, which no suffering had taught the stoop of the invalid; moreover, her unusualness pleased him. Her talk, too, was out of the common, and full of enterprise. What she used of the learning or sentiment of others seemed also to acquire a new personal flavor. Mrs. Westerly had once said, "When Miss Anne quotes Shakspere, it loses the quality of mere quotation. She can't say anything like the rest of us."

As she sat down, she said demurely, "I am not to talk to you. Let us gossip: that is not talk."

"Oh, no," he said, joyously. "I am just about in a state for mere chat, which involves no thinking. Mrs. Lyndsay has been severe."

"I have to fight her a little myself, dear, good, obstinate creature as she is. I suppose she did not talk to you at all,— not a word, I presume?"

"I decline, Miss Anne, to betray the weaknesses of my nurses."

"That is well. Negations often answer questions quite sufficiently in the affirmative. I know she did talk to you, and about that miserable tombstone. She cannot help it, poor mother!"

"Yes. I thought it pitiable. She seemed unable to escape from it."

"It is like her; but it is not wise. Margaret is persistent always. Her likes and dislikes are changeless. She is obstinate in her kindness, her loves, and her charities. As good as gold, we say; but goodness, like gold, is not an insurance of fertile results in all its relations. I mean that goodness can be sometimes exasperating. But, as usual, my tongue is indiscreet. I would like you to understand her. She is worth the trouble."

"Thank you. I never can forget her tenderness and her kind carefulness. Never!"

"Our real battles are over my books. She says my little library is a wilderness of books, and every autumn, on my return, I find the servants have had orders to dust my books."

"How dreadful!"

"Is it not? And the strange things that happen! I like to arrange my books so that they shall be happy, and when I come home and find Swinburne in among the volumes of Jeremy Taylor, and Darwin sandwiched between Addison and the 'Religio Medici,' I get frantic and say things. It is useless."

"How sad!"

"I shall assure her we — you and I — were only gossiping. She has an abiding impression that I talk only high science, and I detest science. Talk I must."

"I think it will do me no harm. I am now quite easy. I have no fever."

"None," said Anne, taking his hand and looking at her watch. "Pulse good, too. I don't think a talk will hurt you. Tell me when you are tired."

"I promise, but you shall do the talking. I will listen."

"You had better be careful how you give such large liberty. Did you ever, by chance, know Miss Pearson?"

"Yes, yes," and he laughed, "years ago — that statistical lady in Germantown. I had some engineering work near there. Oh, years ago: I was a mere lad. I knew all those good people, Mrs. Fox and the Mortons. But what about Miss Pearson? Good woman, I take it?"

"Yes, entirely; but she kept her religion on ice; a sort of east-wind of a woman. She had that bloodless propriety which passes muster for dignity. When you gave me full discretion as to talk, I meant to tell you her description of my conversation; I don't think I shall."

"They had the insight of wickedness. I have the sagacity of love. Rose is very, very dear to me."

"Do you think it possible —"

"That Rose should care for you? Yes. It is possible. But, frankly, yours is a three weeks' acquaintance, ripened by unusual events. Neither she nor we know you as we should know a man to whom —"

"Let me interrupt you. I am thinking of the future. One does not win a woman like Miss Lyndsay in a day."

"You are right. I think, were I you, I would assist the future to take care of itself."

"Thank you. I should like, much as I care for her, to have her get quite away from any sense of obligation to me. I almost wish she could entirely forget it. Any man could have done the little I did, and, after all, you are quite out of my debt."

"No one can pay another's debts. The heart has no clearing-house. Rose must know that. You feel, as I do, that no manly nature should want to be taken for granted, as altogether what is best for life, just on the chances of a minute of decisive action. You want her to know you in many relations, and to know herself also. Is n't that so?"

"It could not be better stated."

"If you had saved her life a dozen times, she would still reflect before she said 'yes,' and be the more apt to hesitate because of the obligation. It is a strong nature."

"But I don't want her to let —"

"No. I understand, and don't misunderstand me. We are quite at one."

"And you will be my friend?"

"Yes. I like you. If you are good enough for my Rose — I doubt — Come and see us; and be prudent now. I never could hold my own tongue. Therefore, much conversational adversity makes me a good adviser. If you see Rose at all before we leave, be on your guard."

"Thank you again," and he took her hand.

"Now I must go. What a pity we were ordered not to talk!"

"Dreadful, was it not? And how good we have been! I assure you, Miss Anne, I am worlds the better for your visit. Good-by. I am to be up on the lounge on Sunday afternoon. Indeed, I am to be carried out to the porch. I could walk well enough. Don't you think I shall have a chance to say good-by?"

"To me? Oh, yes."

"Please, Miss Anne, you know I mean Miss Rose!"

"Why not? And now I must go."

She did not calculate on Mrs. Margaret, who was now once more uneasy about this business, and had a maternal mind to put in its way enough obstacles to make the stream of love run anything but smooth. As I have said, she was conservative. The unusual distressed her. Rose's other love-affairs had been conducted after the conventional manner, and had caused her no great discomfort. There was too much abrupt romance in this courtship, and she feared for the effect on Rose of its singularity, believing it might unsettle her good sense and bring about a too hasty result. She did not understand her daughter; few mothers do.

It was late in the afternoon of Sunday, almost twilight, when the canoes were loaded and ready. Rose came down last and stood with the rest on the beach. Mrs. Lyndsay, her husband, Anne, and the boys had said good-by to Ellett and Carington, but the mother, on this or that excuse, kept the men busy, until at last, Ellett, seeing Carington's impatience, called one of his own people, and with his help lifted his friend out on the porch.

The cliff hid from view the little group on the shore below.

"Confound it," said the sick man, "they are gone! No, I hear them. I think I shall walk to the steps, Ellett."

"You will do nothing of the kind!"

"Hang it all!"

"No. Keep still."

At this moment, as Lyndsay was busy putting his people in the boats, and Tom was thundering advice and orders to the men, Anne said:

"Really, Archie, Rose ought to say good-by to Mr. Carington."

"What is that?" exclaimed Margaret from her canoe, which had just been shoved off from the strand.

"Nothing, dear," said Anne. "It is really ungracious, Archie." This in an aside.

"But Margaret thinks —"

"Margaret will make mischief by wanting not to."

"Well, perhaps you are right. Run up, Rose," he said aloud, "and say good-by to Mr. Carington. He is on the porch now."

"I will go up with you," said Anne; "I forgot to

On reaching home, Anne found a letter from Carington. He wrote:

That astonishing woman — Dorothy Maybrook — has spent most of her time with me. She calmly told Ellett to go a-fishing. He went. I have been admirably nursed, and, as you may suppose, have not lacked conversation. Who 'p'ints' Hiram, in her absence, I do not know.

There has been no news of the Colketts. It is but too probable that she killed the man, and got away in safety. I shall hereafter entertain a profound respect for the intelligence of crime.

It is great fun to hear Ellett and Dorothy. Do write to me — and say pleasant things to all of those dear, good people of yours. Tell Miss Rose I am not too badly crippled to ask for a new place as bowman.

Yours, etc.

CHAPTER XXXII

HE winter days went by, and, although the bridge was built, it seemed to need later much inspection, until, by ill fortune, there were bridges to build in Cuba, and thither Carington went in haste. It was therefore not until mid-June that he reached home again.

While busy with his bridge, and later, he had found himself often at Lyndsay's table, and had come to be a welcome guest. And yet he seemed no nearer to the end he desired. One day, just after he had gone to the West Indies, Anne Lyndsay had said to Rose:

"I think that is a too patient man: I hate a man to be as patient as that. If I were he, I would go away and stay away."

"He won't."

"How long will this state of things go on?"

"I do not know. I cannot be sure. I — aunty, one ought to be so very sure. It is for life! I think he understands me."

"If he were to leave you, my dear, you would cry your eyes out."

"I should."

"How many bears go to a wooing?"

"Let me alone, Aunt. I had better be let alone."

Then Aunt Anne, who was feebler than ever, said to herself, "Love is the only fruit which ripens in the spring." But meanwhile Carington was away in Cuba, as we have said, and the spring came and went without results.

He found in his rooms in Boston, on his return, a letter from Miss Anne Lyndsay. He was depressed in spirits; the town was empty of all he knew, and more than ever he felt the want of a home. When last he saw Miss Rose, she was still, as always, pleasant, gay, and friendly. He had never yet seen fully the emotional side of a nature resolute by construction, and perfectly mistress of all the protective ways of the world of woman. Now and then the dim past of their life on the river seemed to him as if it had never been. More and more time, and the world appeared to be widening the distance between them, and yet once she had looked to be so near.

He sat a minute or two with Anne's letter in his hand. The maiden lady,—"Mistress Anne" he liked to call her, after the Southern fashion his youth remembered,—Mistress Anne had, as the months went by, taken him quietly into the wide circle of her friendships. Her letters, however, were rare enough. She wrote many, but not often to Carington, although from Cuba he had written frequently.

He put aside all the other notes and, lighting a pipe, sat down with Anne's letter, honestly glad of the kindly relation it suggested.

DEAR MR. CARINGTON: I have had a number of letters from you of late, and this is all I have been able to give in return. I have now to limit myself even as to this indulgence.

You won't want to hear about the new books, and you will have, I presume, some quite absurd desire to know about my good people. A man would say, "Everybody quite well, thank you"; but, being a woman, I know better the masculine wants: only women write satisfactory letters.

My good brother is well, and shamefully busy at the game of the law. Mrs. Lyndsay is just now in bed. Dr. North comes daily; but Margaret's maladies, which I must say are rare, are obstinate when they arrive. She has to read a report next week at a society for the prevention of something to something. If she lets that day go by in bed, I shall be alarmed. A dose of duty will cure her at any time. She requires large doses of pity when ill, and as to that I am grimly homeopathic.

Dick is at school — and Ned. They both want what no schools give, some man who will know how to educate the peculiar, and not insist that it be like the unpeculiar. As for Jack, he has begun to work, and takes it hard, and has more rows than ever. One envies England her India for these restless young Vikings. In a week we join Lyndsay on the river.

Carington looked at the date. It was two weeks old.

My niece is very well; as handsome as ever; rather too serious, as I think: one wants a little foolish vagueness in the young. It gives to the human landscape atmosphere, as the painters say. If you don't know what I mean, I am sorry for you. I tell Col. Fox that is what the Quakers lack — atmosphere. (*I* call that *very* clever: *vide* Ellett.) Fox says Friends *are* rather definite,— think of the arrogance of calling themselves Friends, and a big *F* also. This is the great and lovely liberty of the letter. It may wander like a gipsy. I think really I must go back and look. I meant to tell you what North said about tombstone biography. He called it "epitaffy." Is n't that lovely? Also, it has no manner of connection with the rest of this meandering screed.

I was saying that Rose has become too grave. Do not be alarmed. It is only a mood elongated. And now I am going to do a very silly thing. No, I won't! A word to the wise is said

to be enough; sometimes the silence of wisdom is better. I dreadfully hunger after a chance to give you a dose of advice. I write a big ℞, like the doctors', in due form, with that stupid flourish below, which is, I believe, their invocation to Jupiter for luck (they need it); and then — I hesitate. Be so good as to fill in this blank with what I shall only think, not say:

I advise most positively —
. . . . . .?
. . . . . .?

I can hear your anathema.

"I should think so, indeed!" exclaimed Carington; "and what next?"

We shall be in camp before this reaches you. I had some doubt about going myself, but I mean to have all the joys life offers, or that I can decently lay hands on. When the thing is over, I shall just say to my dear people, "By-by; see you again shortly," and laugh a little, and go to sleep. I never could see why folks make such a fuss about dying. The way some people think of it rises to the gravity of a jest. What *would* the goody-goody world say to that — or my dear Margaret Lyndsay?

I hear that you are to be on hand soon. Mr. Ellett has gone up the river, and promises to be very attentive to me. I am all of a flutter. Read with care what I have not written, and believe me, Mysteriously your friend,

ANNE LYNDSAY.

L'envoi.

If you are fond of Scotch literature the poems of Montrose might be of interest.

"Of all the nonsense ever I read!" said Carington; but he went to the side of the room, where the long bookcases overflowed with volumes on which the dust had gathered in his absence. He looked them over, and at last found the one he sought. "Mon-

trose—Graham—James, Marquis of, etc., author of certain songs once popular."

By and by he chanced upon a volume of Scotch ballads, and sat down. Very soon he laid the book, back up and open, on the table, and went on smoking. After a half-hour he discovered that his pipe had long been out. It was, in fact, cold.

He went forth at once, and assured his partners that Cuban malaria necessitated Canadian air. In twenty-four hours he was on his way to the river.

Three days later saw him on the waters he loved. Toward five in the afternoon he heard voices singing. He knew them well, and in a few minutes was ashore at a bend of the stream.

For a few moments he stood, unseen, a little below the lads, who lay back of a rock, caroling their songs, having killed many trout, and filled themselves with a mighty luncheon.

Carington listened a little, and then cried out, "Any bears here?" and walked round the rocks. He was noisily made welcome. "Give me a bit of something," he said. "I pushed on, and have had nothing since nine o'clock."

"There is n't much left," said Jack. "Rufus ate the big pie. There was only one little one for Ned and me."

"They said they did n't want it, and I wish I had n't," said Dick. "Pie 's an awful different thing when it 's outside of you and when it 's inside."

"I have observed that," said Carington. "That will do, Jack. A little marmalade, please. Bad, Dick?"

"Very."

"When we get our deserts, we don't always escape whipping."

"That 's so!" exclaimed Ned. "Just remember that, Red Head."

"Shut up!"

"Behave yourselves," said Jack. "Fact is, sir, we are all about ready for a row."

"Bad as ever?"

"Worse — those two, I mean. I am like a lamb."

"Or a bear-cub," said Ned.

"You wait a bit, old rhyme-snarler."

"Halloa!" said Carington. "Not now, please. How is everybody? and Miss Anne?"

"We are all first-rate. Rose she is up there above us on the point. She wanted to be alone; she loves that. She told the big Indian to come down here and wait till we go up. You can see her red umbrella. She 's sketching. We are to stop for her at six. More bread?"

"Yes. Bless me, it is five o'clock! I must get away. What was that song? I thought I knew your whole repertory."

"Oh," said Ned, "we found that last winter. Tune up, Jack. Dick 's got colic in his bagpipes: he 's no good."

"I did n't catch it quite. No, don't sing it; say it for me."

"Well, here it is," said Ned:

"It was a lorde of the North Countree
Cam' wooing a lady of high degree.

She wad nae listen, she would nae hear;
Till a wee bird sang in that lorde's ear:

"'When spring-tide leaves are fair to see
Brave little wooers we birdies be.
Give me for love-luck bannocks three,
And I will pay a fairy fee.'

"'Ye shall hae bannocks fair and free
For all the birds in the North Countree.'
Up and whistled the little bird friend,
'Wise folks begin where ither folk end.'

"Gay laughed that lorde. Nae more said he,
But thrice he kissed that fair ladye,
He kissed till she was red to see;
And they 're awa' to the North Countree."

"And is that your notion of wooing, Mr. Ned?"

"Rose she says it 's a horrid song."

"You just ask her," said Dick. "Hang that pie!"

Carington, laughing, stepped into his canoe, and settled himself in easy comfort against the baggage piled up behind him. "See you soon, boys."

Then he said, "Michelle, you may drop me at the point where Miss Lyndsay is. I shall walk up."

"Well!" he said to himself. "The family seem unanimous. It would be rather funny if—if it was n't something else."

After this he gave himself up to his thoughts, and what fair cheer the June evening offered. The good mother-nature was all in sympathy, and, foreseeing in her prophetic heart the drama about to be, had set out the stage and its scenery with pleasant prevision.

For here was a stretch of rippled river, where the hidden stones set the waters a-dancing, and there they

rolled high, and anon were possessed of a coy quietness in nooks below the trees, where red and white tangles of rootlets swayed in the current and had their fill as a reward of adventurous growth. The sun was just over a far hill, and low, so that all the long broad reach was aglow with many colors, to which the sky above and the stones below lent variety of help, that none might hope to explain or paint it, and that only the pure joy of it should be left in the heart of man.

And for it all this young fellow in the canoe was open enough, glad to get from the sensual tropic zone to the cool wholesomeness of that he saw. Now and then he caught sight of the red shelter on the point, and tingled, for this love had been fed with mere memories these many months, and now he had won the sweet courage which is a thing native to the wild woods, and wilts in the hordes of men.

Across the waters a mighty wreckage of vast rocks lay, where untold years since they fell in some elemental strife from the granite fortress which still towered high in air. Along its battlements a few grim warder pines kept their centuried watches.

On the beach opposite To-Day sat, and mocked with colors the massive ruin, untroubled by its mystery. To-Day was a maid in a pink gown, for prettiness — standing, sketch in hand, to see, with head on one side, if her sketch had got the vigor of these fallen rocks.

Nature, liking love-affairs, had decoyed the maid into a moment of statuesque repose, and, knowing well her business, had set back of her a bold gray rock, deep sunk in ferns. Against its sternness the

strength of virginal curves stood out, very fair to see. Meanwhile the canoe drew nearer, running close to shore.

At last Carington leaped on the beach, and came straight to where she stood, flushed of a sudden, and with downward hands holding the picture.

"Good evening."

"Oh, Mr. Carington!"

"That will do, Michelle. Don't wait. I shall walk."

The canoe was off and away as she said:

"It must be four miles. Is n't it a rather rough walk?"

"It is nearer five. How are you? How is every one? I can't tell you how glad I am to see you."

"How dreadfully brown you are!"

"Cuban sun, Miss Lyndsay. I am told it is becoming."

"Indeed! Who told you?"

"A young woman on the steamer."

"Indeed."

Here she glanced down the river, and resumed her place on the rock.

"You may sit down there. Please give me that color-box. Those pines are so hard to get in."

"Thank you. I shall sit when I am made welcome. You have not said so much as that you are glad to see me."

"That was stupid of me. Of course I am glad to see you. How did you like Cuba?"

"It was very hot."

"Was that the extent of your observation? It

seems rather limited. Do you think that lower stone is purple enough? Purple is such a difficulty!"

"I wish you would not paint now."

"Why not? But I must. I shall never get just this light again. It is the most important thing in life — that rock."

"Let me see." He took the sketch and put it aside, out of her reach.

"Please," she said.

"No."

"But I shall — I shall be angry."

"You have had your way too long. You get whatever you want. It is very demoralizing."

"But I never got my gold dollar." This was unwise.

"No; you never will."

She was silent now, foreseeing trouble.

Meanwhile he sat on the ferns at her feet. As she spoke, her color-box fell. Carington set it aside. She made no further remonstrance.

"What o'clock is it, Mr. Carington?"

"You are here till six. You can't get away. What is the use of asking the time?"

"I don't know."

"I do. It is my hour, Rose Lyndsay." And he looked up. "For a year we have been seeing one another in the midst of a fog of conventionalities, and the game has been all in your hands. One cannot love and respect a woman and wish to force her to abrupt decisions, and she can always escape. I have waited."

"Please — it is dreadful! I beg of you."

"No. I have been very patient, but I am so no longer. We are here alone: a man and a woman. The world of defense and excuses is far away."

"Oh, if you only knew! It is so hard! If you think I have been happy this winter, you little know."

"How long is this indecision to last?"

"I do not know."

"It is a simple question: Do you care for me? Care! No! I want you to say that you love me! Oh, plainly, Rose Lyndsay, as I have said it until you are weary of it, I dare say."

"How cruel you are! I cannot. I ought to be so sure about such a thing; and I am not — I am not!"

"Then I think I will go." He spoke slowly, with measured distinctness.

"I am sorry," said Rose. "I am more sorry than you can think."

He made no reply for a moment; but, still seated below her on the ferns, put his hands to his head and, looking down at the pebbles, said:

"I came here resolute to force you to say 'Yes' or 'No.' It seemed easy, away from you. Now that you are beside me, I am helpless. If I loved you less, I could do it. I find it easier to carry my weariness of waiting still longer. You are all my life to me. You have a home and constant loves: I have no one — I am alone! What others have in life — sisters, brothers — I lack, as you know. And yet — and yet, I cannot force you to a decision. If you are just to my great love, Rose, I must ask you to say — It might be wiser, both for you and for me, if I were to be positive."

"Oh, no! no!"

"You shall have your way. I will not trouble you again: but, I know you well — you are a woman of sense and courage. If I go, have I not the honest right to expect that some day you will be brave enough just to write to me, yes — or no? I leave it with you. That ought to set you at ease."

"But it does not, — it will not. Life is so hard — and I do — I do want to do what is right!"

"Have I been too hard? Well, good-by." And, so saying, he rose and stood beside her. She glanced up at him, uneasy, pitiful, timid. He put out his hand, "Good-by." She took it, rising as she did so. As she held it, he added:

"I shall go back to-morrow; a telegram will explain it. I must not spoil your holiday. Good-by."

The hand she gave stayed passive in his grasp.

"Let me see you once, Rose, before I go. I mean, look up."

She lifted her gaze, and, as his eyes met hers, he saw.

"Rose!"

"What is it?"

"You love me!"

"No — no. Oh, I don't know!"

Then he caught her in his arms and kissed her, and all her soul went out to him in one great sob of joy and love; and in the sweet pain of it she fell to crying, the fair head on his shoulder.

"Oh, Fred! Fred!" It was all that she could say.

"Are you sorry?"

"No! No!"

"And you are sure?"

"Yes."

"Then don't cry any more."

"I can't — can't help it. I am so — so glad."

She stood and took his two hands, and said, "I was afraid, I was not sure. Now I know; it is for always!"

"Yes, Rose. Sit down, dear." And again he fell on the ferns beside her, and they talked in the tongue of the new land they had found, looking before and after, and asking no more of life than the golden-freighted minutes brought.

Meanwhile the sun fell behind the hill, and the glow of blue and orange light on the waters faded to dusky brown. Tree and rock grew slowly less distinct as the shadows crossed the stream; but on their world another sun arose, and with touch of hands they stayed, talking of the life of love and duty and common helpfulness which lay broad and beautiful before their eyes.

At last they heard the paddles, and their hands fell apart.

"How late you are, boys!"

"Yes; the trout were rising. I 'm awful sorry," said Ned.

"So are we," returned Carington. "We have been horribly bored — Miss Rose and I. I will go up in your boat, Miss Lyndsay, if I may. It is late to walk."

"Certainly."

She had now a little gold dollar in her shut hand, and was silent enough, till he left her at the Cliff Camp.

She went up the steps slowly. What had an hour done with and for her? She was very happy.

"Pleasant, is n't it?" said Anne. "Get a good sketch, dear? Mama and your father are still out. Come here, nearer; what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing."

"Was n't that Mr. Carington I heard on the beach?"

"Yes. He stopped when he saw me sketching."

"Yes. Come and kiss me, Rose."

The girl bent over her.

"I am so glad!"

"Glad? Why?"

"Go and wash your face, and change that ribbon, Miss Ostrich; but, for heaven's sake, don't let Margaret know I guessed it."

"No! no! Dear Aunt Anne! I am so very happy!"

"And I, my darling."

"Will Pardy like it?"

"Very much."

"And Mardy?"

"Yes."

"Oh, here they come,—I must run. I want—I want to be alone, just a little."

"Kiss me again, Rose."

Then the girl fled in haste; but Anne said, "And now I should like to live a little longer."